

# ELAINE HAMILL



**ELAINE  
HAMILL  
1911–1981**

NOTES ON A  
NEW ZEALAND  
MOVIE STAR

by

Ian St George

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"A TYPICAL Australian beauty, Miss Elaine Hamill..."  
*Australian Women's Weekly* 16 November 1935.

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**Cover:** Elaine Hamill, *Evening Star* (Dunedin) 17 July 1936.

## Chapter 1: family

She was born Elaine Warren Hamill in Hamilton on 30 October 1911, the second daughter of Ruth Myrtle (Smith) Hamill 1881–1953 and John Edward Hamill 1878–1956 who had married in Wellington on 15 December 1908.<sup>1</sup> Her elder sister was Jocelyn Ruth Warren Hamill (b.1909) and her younger brother John Warren Hamill (b.1916).

Her father JE Hamill was a prominent athlete and cyclist in Otago in the late 1890s and in 1904 he sang two bass solos at a recital in St Luke's church, Manchester St, Christchurch, singing "with excellent declamatory effect."<sup>2</sup> He sang at the Christchurch Musical Union concerts in June 1904<sup>3</sup> and often thereafter. He performed at the Savage Club in August (along with Willy Densem, Sydney Lough Thomson and other notables)<sup>4</sup> and over the next few years sang in Christchurch, Ashburton and Akaroa.

He had been a land agent for the NZ Farmers' Co-op Association of Canterbury, Ltd in Christchurch<sup>5</sup> when he was married and represented the same firm in Hamilton after August 1911.<sup>6</sup> He took the affirmative, arguing "That a system of profit sharing is the only satisfactory solution of the Labour problem" at the Hamilton Literary and Debating Society on 8 August,<sup>7</sup> was runner-up in the bass solo (sacred) in the Waikato Musical and Elocutionary Competitions in September 1912<sup>8</sup> and third in the "gentlemen" and "lady and gentleman" duets.

He left the Farmers' Co-op. and formed a new real estate company, Hamill, Foster & Co. in 1913,<sup>9</sup> then "JE Hamill & Co, Victoria St "Nearly Opposite Library".<sup>10</sup> He organised a Ratepayers' Association in Hamilton in 1916,<sup>11</sup> sang in concerts and reefered off an occasional letter to the editor. He advertised every day, his name prominently before the

Waikato readers. In 1918 he was President of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce.<sup>12</sup> In November 1918 he sold the firm to Samuel Vaile & Sons<sup>13</sup> and in January 1919 resigned from the Chamber of Commerce.

He was spending time away, as North Island organiser for the National Efficiency League, part of the New Zealand Alliance for the Suppression of the Liquor Traffic in 1919,<sup>14</sup> “a successful farmer, and... also a pleasing and forceful speaker.”<sup>15</sup> He sold his farm at Hairini, near Te Awamutu, in August.<sup>16</sup>

In 1919 he had bought the *King Country Chronicle* and the Hamills moved to Te Kuiti, the newspaper now “Printed and published every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday by the proprietor, J. E. Hamill, at his registered printing office, King Street, Te Kuiti, King Country.”

## King Country Chronicle.

TE KUITI

TE KUITI, SATURDAY JANUARY 3, 1920.

TE KUITI

In January 1920,

Mr J. E. Hamill, proprietor of the King Country Chronicle, Te Kuiti, is spending a holiday at Mount Maunganui. He is accompanied by Mrs Hamill and family. Mr Hamill is delighted with the Mount as a seaside resort, and considers it is one of the most delightful spots in New Zealand.<sup>17</sup>

He presented the Hamill Shield for competition among the teams in the Maniapoto Cricket Association.<sup>18</sup> He sang, he led opinion in the *Chronicle*, he attended every town meeting and he “compiled 81 runs for his club against Pio Pio—the highest

individual score in competition cricket for the past two seasons".<sup>19</sup> In middecember,

The task that Mr Albert Steele set himself to break the world's continuous piano-playing record was successfully accomplished on Saturday night. The People's Picture Palace was filled to witness the finish. The intervening time between the conclusion of the pictures and midnight was filled in by an impromptu concert, members of the audience contributing items. At midnight Mr J. E. Hamill announced that the record had been broken, the pianist having played continuously for five minutes over 110¾ hours. On behalf of the audience he extended to Mr Steele warm congratulations on his remarkable performance. The announcement was greeted with a burst of cheering, the pianist receiving another round of hearty applause when he stopped playing. It was an astonishing exhibition of physical and mental endurance, and what probably impressed the audience most was the unaffected way in which Mr Steel left the hall, without feigning a collapse or any other dramatic posture. His fingers were very puffy, and his lower limbs badly cramped. Want of sleep was also a great trial, as he had been awake continuously for nearly five nights.<sup>20</sup>

The "People's Picture Palace" was the Te Kuiti town hall which served as the main movie theatre.

Hamill was judge at sports meetings, vice-president of the Boxing Association and of the Chamber of Commerce, helped form an Orphans' Club, raised money for the hospital fund, was churchwarden for St Luke's and president of the Maniapoto Cricket Association.

In December 1921 he was sued before a Hamilton Supreme Court jury for libelling the Waitomo County Clerk in the

*Chronicle*. The case for libel was found proved and he paid a nominal fine.<sup>21</sup>

In June 1922 he sold the *Chronicle* to Samuel Craig of Invercargill's *Southland Times*.<sup>22</sup> Soon the family would leave Te Kuiti,

At the meeting of the Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday evening, Mr Broadfoot referred to the impending departure of Mr J. E. Hamill from the town, and the services he had rendered to the town during his residence here. The speaker stated that Mr Hamill had a good "punch," but in everything he had been a fair fighter, as all his opponents would acknowledge. Various speakers spoke in a similar strain, and on the motion of Mr Broadfoot it was decided to forward to Mr Hamill a letter of appreciation of his good work both as a citizen and a member of the Chamber. The motion was carried by acclamation.<sup>23</sup>

In September 1924 he bought a "large interest" in the *Franklin Times*,<sup>24</sup> and in January was playing cricket for Pukekohe.<sup>25</sup> In September 1925 He bought the *Taihape Daily Times*.<sup>26</sup> But then, alas,

## **FIRE IN NEWSPAPER OFFICE.**

### **PLANT BADLY DAMAGED.**

(By Telegraph.—Press Association.)

Taihape, this day.

A fire occurred in the office of the *Taihape Times* at 6 o'clock this morning, and gutted the main portion of the building. Damage was done to the printing machine by fire and water, and the type plant is a total loss. A linotype was badly damaged by water. The fire originated in a fireplace. The plant and building was insured, but details are unavailable. (The *Taihape Times*



was acquired by Mr. J. E. Hamill, formerly proprietor of the King Country Chronicle, some two years ago.)<sup>27</sup>

In fact the linotypes and printing press survived. Hamill recovered and changed the name to the *Taihape Times*. Ruth was elected to the Plunket Society and he officiated at the Boxing Club; he was not afraid to take on the big boys in Auckland,

### **SCIENCE AND THE SOUL.**

I should like to ask your correspondent, Mr. C. E. Major, a question. If the spirit does not come from, and return to, "God who gave it," then whence does it come? Is it merely the product of the flesh? Both Sir Arthur Keith and Mr. Major appear to think that it is. If they do, then they invest atoms of matter with entirely new and unsuspected powers, and no doubt Sir Ernest Rutherford would be thrilled with the prospect—if it were true. The possibility that incredulity and doubt, such as Mr. Major manifests, lie latent in the specks of electricity that constitute the atom is a staggering thought. On the other hand, if Mr. Major says that the spirit does come from an external source, but that, when the body returns to dust, the spirit ceases to exist, then the processes of matter may be called in to confound him. The fundamental substance of which all atoms of matter are composed is electricity. But is electricity ever extinguished? When the zinc and carbon and acid that constitute an electric battery become worn out is the electric field extinguished? Does it not return to the reservoirs of Nature? And if the spirit is not the product of the flesh, but comes, like electricity, from an external source, then why should it not also return when its temporary material vehicle of carbon, oxygen and hydrogen, etc., is worn out? In short, on what scientific principle does Mr. Major

base his theory that the spirit is not subject to natural laws?

Taihape.

J. E. HAMILL.<sup>28</sup>

Elaine Hamill was training to be a nurse at Napier Hospital in February 1931, when the earthquake struck and the *Chronicle* reported,

A tragic incident was the collapse of the Nurses' Home at Napier, resulting in the death of a number of nurses. Refugees have arrived at different towns outside of Napier, but they are unable to express definite opinions as to the number killed. The scenes in Napier have been described as resembling a bombardment under conditions of war. Owing to a breakdown in the water, sewerage, and lighting systems in Napier, a general order has been issued from Wellington ordering the evacuation of the town within two days, as it is feared an epidemic will occur.... The Nurses' Home and Hospital on the hill collapsed like weatherboarding in a hurricane.... Miss Elaine Hamill, a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Hamill, now of Taihape and formerly resident in Te Kuiti, was a nurse in the Napier Hospital.<sup>29</sup>

She survived and attended the annual Taihape Plunket Ball, organised by the RSA, in July.<sup>30</sup> Her father, mother and sister were there.

The *Times* was published three times a week from 1 March 1930 and reduced to four pages during the Depression. Ruth ("Mrs J.E. Hamill") was President of the women's committee controlling the Taihape Girl Guide movement,<sup>31</sup> and the Taihape Boxing Association annual meeting "was unanimous in its praise of the sterling services rendered the association by Mr. J. E. Hamill, who had given much time to coaching and training members, and then, often at his own expense, entering them in the various centre championships."<sup>32</sup>

Jocelyn Ruth Hamill married Eric Dudley Chisholm in Taihape on Easter Monday (April) 1934.<sup>33</sup> He was with the Bank of New South Wales and was posted to Kaikohe, where their son David was born. Eric played cricket and was captain of the golf club: when he was posted to Wellington in 1938 there was “a genuine feeling of regret at the loss to the community of one who has made himself so popular during his five years in Kaikohe”.<sup>34</sup> The *Northern Advocate* said,

The Glee Circle of the Women’s Institute held a farewell evening on Monday night to Mrs E. D. Chisholm, who has been pianist to the circle since its inception. The circle sang several numbers. Mrs W. H. Moor gave a musical monologue, and Mrs S. G. Robinson sang. Two competitions were won by Mrs Chisholm and one by Mrs H. R. Carey. Some beautiful crystal was presented to Mrs Chisholm in recognition of her services. A lovely supper was served and Auld Lang Syne was sung.<sup>35</sup>

Jocelyn and Eric Chisholm sailed in the *Achille Lauro* on 11 March 1969 for Melbourne. She died on 26 March 1969—in New Zealand, the record says.

In 1938 JE Hamill was removed from the Taihape Times company. In May Mr and Mrs JE Hamill moved back to Te Kuiti, but by 1939 were living at 3 Mohau St Rotorua.

Then, in 1941, real tragedy,

Advice has been received in Taihape that Pilot-Officer Warren Hamill, only son of Mr and Mrs J. E. Hamill, formerly of Taihape, has been killed in action while serving with the Royal Air Force in Britain. He was a pilot and usually flew a Spitfire fighter. He lost an eye in a crash some months ago. He was educated at the Wanganui Collegiate School and was engaged in journalism for a short time after leaving school. Later he became manager of a theatre, but was engaged in this

occupation for a short time only before going to England in 1937 to join the Royal Air Force. Pilot Officer Hamill made a name for himself while a member of the Air Force. His father was formerly managing editor of the *Taihape Times*.<sup>36</sup>

Warren Hamill had managed the Opera House picture theatre in Oamaru in 1936.<sup>37</sup>

Eric Chisholm attended the Bank Officers' 22<sup>nd</sup> annual conference in Wellington in 1941, when,

Bank officers as a war measure had voluntarily agreed, with the consent of the Minister of Labour, to work up to an extra four hours a week without any additional payment, in order to assist the banks to give the fullest possible service to their customers, despite the difficulties created by war conditions.<sup>38</sup>

Brave lads.

John Edward Hamill's last letter to the editor was to the *New Zealand Herald* on 30 April 1945 when he was aged 67. It ended with the somewhat muddled sentiments,

... the old order is changing, and man now seems to want a religion with little, if any, allegory with it. In short, nothing will more quickly put an edge on his faith than a great blaze of light on the truth about the life and deeds of the best Friend that man ever had, or ever will have, Jesus of Nazareth.

He died in 1956 aged 78.

Ruth had died in Rotorua in 1953; in her will she wrote,

I GIVE AND BEQUEATH all plate plated goods  
linen china glass books prints pictures  
furniture and other articles of household use  
or ornamentation and of personal use wear or  
adornment including jewellery and watches

owned by me at my death to my daughter  
JOCELYN RUTH WARREN CHISHOLM.

I GIVE AND BEQUEATH to my daughter ELAINE  
WARREN SCARLETT my coloured photograph of me  
in fancy costume.<sup>39</sup>

These were the larger than life parents of Elaine Warren Hamill, who would become a movie star.

- 
- 1 *NZ Times* 29 January 1909.
  - 2 *Lyttelton Times* 27 May 1904.
  - 3 *Lyttelton Times* 4 June 1904.
  - 4 *Lyttelton Times* 17 August 1905.
  - 5 *Akaroa Mail and Banks Peninsula Advertiser* 16 February 1904.
  - 6 *Waikato Argus* 7 May 1912.
  - 7 *Waikato Argus* 3 August 1912/
  - 8 *Waikato Argus* 24 September 1912.
  - 9 *NZ Herald* 30 September 1913.
  - 10 *Waikato Times* 21 May 1914.
  - 11 *Waikato Times* 1 July 1916.
  - 12 *Waikato Times* 15 October 1918.
  - 13 *Waikato Times* 2 November 1918.
  - 14 *Nelson Evening Mail* 2 April 1919.
  - 15 *Colonist* 3 April 1919.
  - 16 *King Country Chronicle* 12 August 1919.
  - 17 *Bay of Plenty Times* 10 January 1920.
  - 18 *King Country Chronicle* 22 June 1920.
  - 19 *King Country Chronicle* 9 December 1920.
  - 20 *King Country Chronicle* 14 December 1920.
  - 21 *Auckland Star* 10 December 1921.
  - 22 *King Country Chronicle* 15 June 1922.
  - 23 *King Country Chronicle* 14 December 1922.
  - 24 *Franklin Times* 17 September 1924.
  - 25 *Franklin Times* 16 January 1925.
  - 26 *Waikato Times* 25 September 1925.
  - 27 *King Country Chronicle* 5 February 1927.
  - 28 *Auckland Star* 26 May 1928.

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- 29 *King Country Chronicle* 5 February 1931.  
30 *Auckland Star* 18 July 1931.  
31 *Auckland Star* 28 September 1932.  
32 *Auckland Star* 17 September 1932.  
33 *Waipa Post* 10 April 1934.  
34 *Northern Advocate* 5 February 1938.  
35 *ibid.*  
36 *Manawatu Standard* 4 January 1941.  
37 *Otago Daily Times* 30 May 1936.  
38 *Evening Post* 7 June 1941.  
39 NZ National Archives: Hamilton Court Probate Records 1953 P9652-  
P9681

## Chapter 2: early years in New Zealand

The name Elaine Hamill first appears in the *King Country Chronicle* in June 1920 when, at age 9, she received third prize in the fourth class of girls at the St Luke's church Sunday School.<sup>1</sup>

A year later

There was not a vacant seat in the People's Picture Palace last night, when the concert organised by Mrs F. Darrow, through the courtesy of the Te Kuiti Picture Co., in aid of the Queen Carnival, took place. The concert portion of the programme took the form of a children's singing competition.... Margaret Adams, who was twice recalled for her singing of "The Sunshine of Your Smile"... scored a large majority of votes, and was duly declared the winner, amid applause.... Others to compete were:—Girls: Joan Lusk, "Oh! What a Pal Was Mary"; Nancy Jordan, "Let the Great Big World Keep Turning"; Sybil Wood, "Hawaiian Sunshine"; Elaine Hamill, "The Fir Tree"...<sup>2</sup>

A month later, while sister Jocelyn took 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the Senior Girls at the Sunday School prizegiving, Elaine took top prize in the First Class of Intermediate Girls.<sup>3</sup> Later that month the Te Kuiti School Committee held a "Queen Carnival" as a fundraiser:

The following is the position of the Queens:—

Infants: Rangi Hetet	1
High School: Annie Nilson	2
Stds. 1 and 2: Connie Avery	3
Stds. 3 and 4: Elaine Hamill	4
Stds. 5 and 6: Jocelyn Hamill	5 <sup>4</sup>

The *New Zealand Herald* of 3 July 1922 reported, apparently in all seriousness, who had done best.

The system of creating friendly rivalry among the individual queens of respective standards proved a very satisfactory means of raising funds in these somewhat strenuous days, particularly in winter. Results of the carnival were:—Infants, Rangihua Hetet (£249 1s 5d), 1; standards 3 and 4, Elaine Hamill (£212 11s 9d), 2; High School, Annie Nilson (£173 18s 6d), 3; standards 5 and 6, Jocelyn Hamill (£119 14s 5d), 4; standards 1 and 2, Connie Avery (£100 14s 1d), 5.

Poor Jocelyn must have been livid.

## **THE CROWNING CEREMONY.**

### **DAZZLING FUNCTION AT THE PEOPLE'S.**

#### **ROYAL PAGEANT.**

It would be no idle boast to say that the coronation ceremony (which marks the final stage in the Queen Carnival competitions) was one of the most lavishly produced and dazzling functions ever seen in New Zealand, and that is saying a great deal. The People's Picture Palace, where the ceremony was performed, was literally transformed into a Royal Palace, and a stately air pervaded the interior right from the stirring trumpet call of the Heralds to the bestowal of Honours by Her Majesty upon her worthy citizens. And with what grace and royal dignity did the youthful participants act their parts....

Queen Elaine Hamill (Stds. III and IV.) Ladies-in-waiting: Elta Jarvie, Moya Walker, Emily Waite, May Ormsby.<sup>5</sup>

She won the standard 4 girls' prize in the school gardening competition in December 1922.<sup>6</sup>



In 1924 Elaine was attending St Cuthberts and was third in the upper school novice swimming.<sup>7</sup> Ten years later the *Horowhenua Chronicle* would look back on the seeds of her success,

After being educated at St. Cuthbert's School, Auckland, and at Nga Tawa Girls' School, Marton, Miss Hamill, who is the younger daughter of Mr. J. E. Hamill, owner-editor of the Taihape "Times," trained as a nurse at the Napier Hospital. She had a miraculous escape from death in the earthquake of February, 1931, in which the Napier Hospital and Nurses' Home were demolished. She continued her training after this at the Hastings Hospital, and made an excellent pass in her final examinations.<sup>8</sup>

She was in Sprott House at Nga Tawa, the Wellington Diocesan Girls' School at Marton, and was a prefect. Most sources have her completing her nursing training at Dannevirke hospital later in 1931 (rather than Hastings). Years later she told the *Auckland Star*,

When the earthquake occurred at Hawke's Bay, Miss Hamill was nursing at the Napier Public Hospital, and when the first crash took place she was enjoying a bath. She remembered her mother's warning in case of earthquakes, and flew from the bath to a doorway. She got there just as the bathroom collapsed. Previous to this happening she had been invited by three other nurses to partake of morning tea with them, but her intended bath prevented her from accepting this invitation. The nurses who had asked her were in a room which collapsed. Miss Hamill afterwards worked as a nurse at the Dannevirke Hospital.<sup>9</sup>

Back in 1929, at the Polo Ball in the Feilding Drill Hall on 10 April,

... the interior (was) effectively effaced by a canopy of blue and gold bunting which was suspended from wall to wall. The lights were hung around with circles from which trailed decorations in the shape of golden leaves and fernery, while the stage had been turned into a cosy lounge, set off with large bowls of hydrangeas. The walls of the hall carried shields representing the clubs affiliated with the Polo Association. The effect was delightfully soft and original.... The frocking of the guests presented a wide and varied choice and the daintiness of the ensemble was the outstanding feature.... Miss J. Hamill (Taihape), rose pink taffetas and silk net; Miss E. Hamill (Taihape) blue georgette and silver lace....<sup>10</sup>

The Misses J and E Hamill qualified for the junior championship of the Taihape Ladies' Golf Club in August 1929.<sup>11</sup>

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1 *King Country Chronicle* 17 June 1920.

2 *King Country Chronicle* 11 May 1922.

3 *King Country Chronicle* 15 June 1922.

4 *King Country Chronicle* 17 June 1922.

5 *King Country Chronicle* 19 August 1922.

6 *King Country Chronicle* 19 December 1922.

7 *New Zealand Herald* 22 March 1924.

8 *Horowhenua Chronicle* 31 October 1934.

9 *Auckland Star* 13 June 1936.

10 *Manawatu Standard* 11 April 1929.

11 *Manawatu Standard* 9 August 1929.

### Chapter 3: in Sydney

The 31 October 1934 *Horowhenua Chronicle* continued,

Miss Hamill, however, has always had stage ambitions. She entered for the “Search for Beauty” contest conducted by Paramount, but was unsuccessful owing to her height, which is over five feet eight inches. Eight months ago she left for Sydney, and has since studied under various teachers at the Cinema Academy. In the interval she has also been doing mannequin work for David Jones, the Farmers’, and other leading Sydney firms.<sup>1</sup>

In 1933 Paramount Pictures ran a much publicised quest throughout New Zealand to find “a perfect New Zealand man” and “a perfect New Zealand woman” to go to Hollywood and appear in a forthcoming picture, to be called *The Search for Beauty*. The two “perfect” persons would be assessed on beauty, personality and talent. Fourteen other couples would be selected from every other English-speaking country and would also appear in the film. The two New Zealand winners would receive a contract to appear in *The Search for Beauty*; travel to and from Hollywood; hotel accommodation in Hollywood; \$50 a week for a minimum of five weeks; an opportunity to share in the \$2,000 grand prize to be divided between the man and woman giving the best performance in the picture.<sup>2</sup>

The New Zealand winners were announced in October: Joyce Neilson of Wellington, never to be heard of after appearing in *The Search for Beauty*, and Colin Tapley of Dunedin, exRAF pilot who had been in the first Richard Byrd expedition to the Antarctic; Tapley went on to become a Hollywood star, with 85 movie credits between 1934 and 1969.<sup>3</sup>



▲ Joyce Neilson  
Colin Tapley ►



It seems Elaine Hamill left for Australia in February 1934, so she missed her sister Jocelyn's wedding on 1 April 1934. She was quickly in the social scene, noticed at a party at Romano's held by the actor Audrey Nicholson on 18 April.<sup>4</sup> At a dinner dance at the Hotel Australia in June, even though "the ballroom was filled with beautifully-gowned dancers,"

Miss Elaine Hamill, of New Zealand, was an outstanding figure in her frock of black net.<sup>5</sup>

At five foot eight in her stockings she must have really stood out in heels. She was studying drama at the Cinema Academy ("We Train Students for Australian Films. The Cinema Academy. Grace Building. Sydney"). John Warwick, the actor husband of New Zealand actor Molly Raynor, was producer for the Cinema Academy Players during Elaine Hamill's time at the Academy.

**YOU ARE A SCREEN TYPE.**  
 An Opportunity is Awaiting You at  
**THE CINEMA ACADEMY,**  
 Under the Patronage of  
**CINESOUND PRODUCTIONS, LTD.,**  
 For the Training of Pupils for the Screen.  
**DAY AND EVENING CLASSES.**

**INSTRUCTORS:**  
 J. W. Varna, late of the West End, LONDON, and renowned teacher of acting.  
 W. Lane-Bayliff, who played Ironhark in "The Squatter's Daughter," and Rev. Meliland, Genl.  
 in "Mistress of Deceit Meliland."  
 Miss Molly Kirwan, Specialist in Voice Culture.  
**'PHONE MA1881.**

**ADDRESS: 329, 3rd FLOOR, GRACE BUILDING, KING AND YORK STS., SYDNEY.**

*Sydney Morning Herald* 3 February 1934.

... throughout the 1930s, Cinesound maintained a close formal relationship with a local school known as the Cinema Academy, with instructors such as George Cross and W. Lane Bayliff, who themselves appeared regularly in Cinesound productions. Ken Hall and his "talent scouts" frequently visited the Academy to watch plays performed by the students, and the school exploited this in its publicity by stating that it was run "under the patronage" of Cinesound. From this association, Hall gained immediate access to supporting players who were anxious to gain experience and could give professional polish to the smallest roles in each production.<sup>6</sup>

She was "doing mannequin work for David Jones, the Farmers', and other leading Sydney firms"<sup>7</sup> and Sydney's *Truth* (29 August 1934) carried her photograph—

ELAINE HAMILL, one of a beautiful  
 sextette of mannequins, to appear in  
 the J.C.W. production to follow  
 "Gay Divorce" at the Theatre Royal



Melbourne celebrated its centenary in 1934 and film maker Beaumont Smith took full advantage of it in his film *Splendid Fellows*, marketed in New Zealand with the subhead “Hayseeds at the Centenary”. Elaine Hamill had a bit part in her first film and her name was used in the NZ marketing,

## AMUSEMENTS

### PLAZA THEATRE

#### “HAYSEEDS AT THE CENTENARY”

“Hayseeds at the Centenary,” released as “Splendid Fellows,” delighted audiences at the Plaza Theatre yesterday.

#### THE CAST

Rev. Arthur Stanhope	...	Eric Colman
Lord Ralston	...	Andrew Higginson
Hon. Hubert Montmorency	Ralston ...	Frank Leighton
Tommy Thompson	...	Leo Franklyn
Jim McBride	...	Frank Bradley
Mrs McBride	...	Peggy Ross
Eileen McBride	...	Isabelle Mahon
Maude Vernon	...	Madge Aubrey
Jean Parker	...	Elaine Hamill
Captain Parsons	...	Reg. Hawthorn
Scotty	...	Doug. MacKinnon
Mrs Brogan	...	Connie Martin
Tilly	...	Sadie Bedford
Blind Teddy	...	Billy Stewart
The Great Spigoni	...	Charles Zoli
Policeman	...	Fred Bonner

Briefly the film depicts the adventures of The Hayseeds at the Melbourne Centenary, but there is an excellent story throughout, bringing into the picture the “Splendid Fellows” allusion. This part of the story revolves largely round the Centenary Air Race.<sup>8</sup>



### **Australian Tale of Splendid Fellows.**

A splendid story of splendid fellows! Australia has excelled herself this time, and gleaned from her centenary celebrations a story that is new, modern to the minute, and thrilling to the finish. Beaumont Smith presents the J. C. Williamson production, "Splendid Fellows," at the Regent shortly with confidence in his combination of cast and narrative. Aeroplanes and the air race which is still so vividly of the present, provide the motive power and speed of the plot, and with a new story, are introduced a team of actors that is completely new to us. There is something eminently exciting in the dedication "to men who love and lose—with honour! And to women who inspire men to win or lose with honour!" the plot is clear-cut, black and white. Titled English respectability flouted fraternally, results in the Hon. Hubert Montmorency Ralston being typically packed off to Australia. And there, in Sydney, the Honourable Hubert lands him in a comedy turn at a vaudeville. Through this he meets Blind Teddy, an erstwhile prospector whose sight has stolen from him the possibility of wealth, and the McBrides, sheep-farmers from Queensland. Meanwhile the Rev. Arthur Stanhope, who is known as "The Flying Padre," on the receipt of a telegram from Lord Ralston, arrives at the boarding house where Hubert and the McBrides are staying. Talk between them is of aeroplanes and the great race for which the padre is designing a 'plane. Monty, a keen aviator, offers his help. Time moves swiftly on to the eve of the great race. Monty and Tommy plan to fly to England, The finish is breath-taking. Eric Colman gives a great performance as the Reverend Arthur Stanhope, the man who was loved throughout the length of Australia, who did a man's job in a man's country, who sacrificed his right to the glory of competing in an



historic race to the call of his continent-wide parish. Andrew Higginson, as Lord Ralston, gives a fiery and characteristic study and Frank Leighton, as his son “Monty,” is excellent. Isabelle Mahon is Eileen McBride, a very charming Australian lass who holds the key to a romance. Leo Franklyn, Frank Bradley, Peggy Ross, Madge Aubrey, Elaine Hamill, and the other members of the cast all add strength and conviction to their story.<sup>9</sup>

Despite a cameo appearance by Charles Kingsford-Smith it was a critical and box office flop and caused Beaumont Smith to retire from film making.

Elaine was still modelling,



“MISS ELAINE HAMILL, of The Blue Mountains Melody Co., likes the sunshine and the new Buick series 40 sedan.” *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 13 September 1934. The Buick cost £495.



PUTTING ON the finishing touches—an interesting picture taken at a dress rehearsal of 'Blue Mountain Melody.' Miss Jessie Tait is giving a last-minute look at the beach costumes worn by Misses Elaine Hamill and Dorothy Rumney. M. Pierre Fornari, who with Miss Tait and Miss Gretel Bullmore, designed the frocking of the show, is seen at left. Miss Hamill (centre) is one of the finalists in The Australian Women's Weekly Screen Personality Quest.

## **FINAL STAGE . . .**

*in Amazing*

## **FILM QUEST**

**NAMES of *Winners* NEXT WEEK**

**State Theatre Function**

**The last stage in the great State-wide search for film talent conducted by The Australian Women's**

**Weekly in co-operation with the City of Sydney Eisteddfod, Cinesound, and the Cinema Academy has now been reached.**

**Unprecedented interest was aroused by this competition. From over a thousand competitors tested throughout the State by experienced judges, twelve were selected for screen tests. These tests have now been developed and final judgment will be passed on them this week by Mr. Ken Hall, general manager of Cinesound.**

COMPETITORS and the public who attended the judging at the Savoy Theatre will remember that Mr. Hall unfortunately became suddenly ill as he was addressing the audience.

On the advice of his doctor Mr. Hall went for a sea trip from which he returned early this week, and, we are happy to add, completely recovered. As soon as possible he will pass final judgment, and the results will be announced in the next issue of The Australian Women's Weekly.

The twelve finalists who were given tests were the Misses Jan Daly, Jean Elwing, T. Krag-Christensen, Heather McCulloch, Elaine Hamill, Aileen Britton, and Messrs. Richard Francis, T. Farley, D. J. Hill, Morris Dunkley, T. C. Brooks, and Summner Locke-Elliott. Naturally they and their friends and the thousands of people throughout the State who have been keenly interested in the competition are most anxious to know the results of the contest, and will welcome the news that they have only one more week to wait before knowing the final results.

**All of them, however, are to be heartily congratulated on the amount of success they have attained in being selected as the twelve most talented people from over a thousand, all of whom manifested**

**ability above the average. Each, too, has had the benefit of a screen test, which is far too expensive a matter for many people to arrange privately. As mentioned before, each test costs approximately £25.**

**INDEED**, everyone who entered this competition has benefited from the experience, and the many grateful letters received show how warmly competitors have appreciated the opportunity which the quest provided. The Australian Women's Weekly takes this opportunity of thanking the many writers of letters of appreciation concerning the quest.

**NAMES** of the winners will be announced in the next issue of The Australian Women's Weekly, and on the evening of Friday, October 11, an historic function has been arranged at the State Theatre, when the Lord Mayor (Alderman A. L. Parker) has graciously consented to present the cash prizes of £50 each to the two winners.

All the twelve who reached the last stage of the competition will appear on the stage when the public will have an opportunity of congratulating them and showing their appreciation of their talent. The ceremony will take place during the interval, about 9.20 p.m., and will be broadcast through 2UW. The programme at the State for that evening will include "Chu Chin Chow" and a "Cup of Kindness."

**THE** twelve finalists were invited to be the guests of honor at the "Strike Me Lucky" Ball, when the six Eisteddfod prizes were donated to the winners as follows: First: Miss Jan Daly and Mr. Richard Francis; second: Miss Jean Elwing and Mr. T. Farley; third: Miss T. Krag-Christensen and Mr. D. J. Hill. An extra prize for a country candidate who successfully passed the tests was given to Mr. T. C. Brooks, of Newcastle.<sup>10</sup>

Elaine was offered the lead in *Grandad Rudd*.

## N.Z. GIRL'S CHANCE IN AUST. FILM

AFTER FEW MONTHS' STUDY IN SYDNEY



Elaine Hamill, 22-year-old New Zealander, who came to Sydney eight months ago to try and get a chance in Australian movies, has secured the feminine lead in Bert Bailey's new starring picture, "Granddad Rudd," which will go into production within a week under the direction of Ken G. Hall. Having

been advised by Cinesound to learn dramatic art for the screen. Miss Hamill went to the Cinema Academy, and studied under various teachers there. At present she appears as a show girl in "The Blue Mountain Melody."<sup>11</sup>

A few days after signing the contract for her part in "Granddad Rudd," Miss Hamill heard that she had won "The Australian Personality Contest," the prize being £50 and a part in a picture. There were 1000 entrants for this competition and the judges took six weeks to select the winner after exhaustive tests had been applied.<sup>12</sup>

The *Women's Weekly* explained,

MISS ELAINE HAMILL, one of the two winners of our Screen Personality Quest, is at present in the cast of "Blue Mountain Melody." She is concluding her engagement with J. C. Williamson this week to start rehearsing in "Grandad Rudd," Cinesound's forthcoming production.<sup>13</sup>

**Another *triumph* for  
THE CINEMA ACADEMY  
Elaine Hamill Starred**



This beautiful young New Zealander has been awarded a contract by Cinesound, and plays the juvenile lead in Cinesound's 1934 best production.

Miss Hamill's only training in this country was received from the Cinema Academy, where she studied under various teachers.

Miss Hamill also won the special first prize in "The Australian Women's Weekly Screen Personality Contest."—Barely a proof of the efficiency of the Academy training in screen technique.

**THE CINEMA ACADEMY**

(Under Patronage of Cinesound Productions Ltd.)  
GRACE BUILDING, 37 YORK STREET, SYDNEY. MAJOR

Are you a Star of the future? Let us give you a FREE oral test.

*Australian Women's Weekly* 13 October 1934.



"Winner Of Our Film Personality Quest:"  
*Australian Women's Weekly* 13 October 1934.

MISS ELAINE HAMILL, the winner of the women's prize, wore a white crinkle crepe dress with touches of red, and looked most charming. She carried a sheaf of beautifully shaded roses. Australian audiences will, we know, be delighted with this beautiful girl, who has such marked acting ability, and so soft and musical a voice.<sup>14</sup>

Elaine did some charity work,

#### TO AID FAR WEST SCHEME

To help the Far West Children's Health Scheme, "Sometimes Even Now" is to be played at the Savoy

Theatre to-night, by the Cinema Academy pupils. Mr. John Warwick is the producer, and the cast includes Miss Elaine Hamill, now featuring in Cinesound's "Granddad Rudd."<sup>15</sup>

She was now on the celebrity circuit,

**FILM OF TAKE-OFF  
RAPID PRODUCTION**

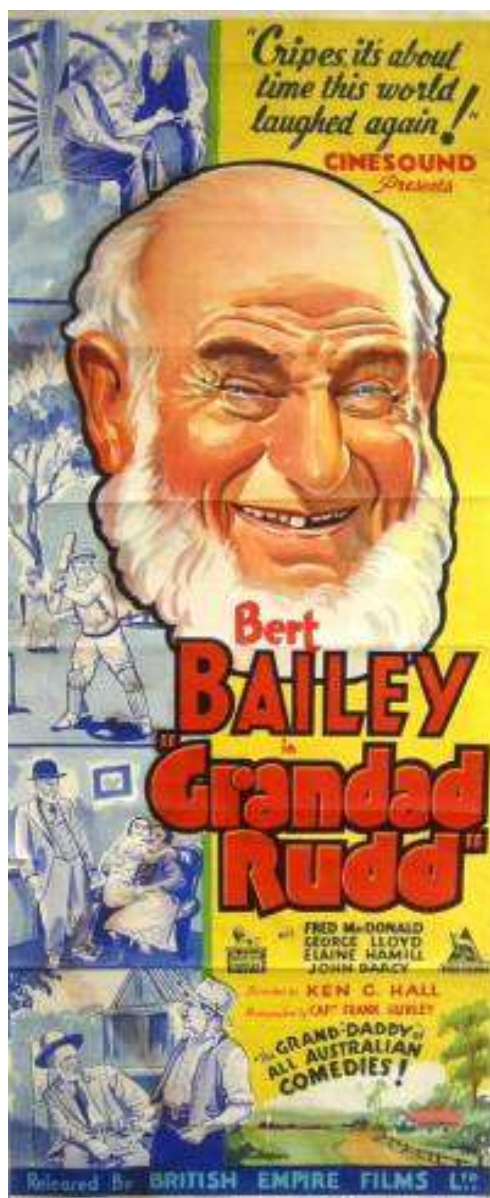
Received November 14, 1.15 p.m.  
SYDNEY, Nov. 14

The fliers Hewett, Kay and Stewart, on their Tasman flight, are carrying a film of their take-off from Mascot yesterday afternoon for Richmond. It shows Miss Elaine Hamill, the New Zealand actress, wishing them "a happy landing on their home shores." The film was hurriedly developed in Sydney and rushed to Richmond. It should be shown in New Zealand theatres to-night.<sup>16</sup>

The airmen in their de Havilland Dragon had taken fifth place in the London to Melbourne centenary air race and, having fitted larger tanks for the transtasman hop, were heading home from Sydney.

Her big break was indeed *Granddad Rudd*, with the Dad and Dave characters created by author Steele Rudd. It was a sequel to the highly successful talkie *On Our Selection*. Dad Rudd (Bert Bailey) is a successful farmer but tight with his money and mean to his sons Dave, Joe and Dan. They eventually persuade him to increase their wages—but he increases their rent by an equal sum. Dad's grandchild Betty (Elaine Hamill) is engaged to a corrupt neighbour, Henry Cook (John D'Arcy), despite the true love of another farmer, Tom Dalley (John Cameron). The climax involves a comic cricket game.<sup>17</sup>





Movies were news and the newspapers followed every move....

## **Film News**

### **AROUND AUSTRALIAN STUDIOS**

Ken Hall is now directing the scenes being taken outside Camden, New South Wales, for "Grandad Rudd," and Elaine Hamill, Molly Raynor, Les Warton, and Bert Barley have practically lived in saddles during the past month. The cricket scenes of the production are some of the funniest yet conceived for an Australian motion picture, and it is certain Bert Bailey will get plenty of laughs out of these sequences. Molly Raynor, by the way, says that she is very fond of horses, but they put a ding in her self-respect.

Les Warton, the man who has been so well known throughout Australia for years past in coon parts in stage and radio plays, plays the part of Regan in "Grandad Rudd." Les is practically a non-drinker, and possibly the reason for this is that at one time he owned a hotel on the Bendigo goldfield, where he saw the miners spending their hard-earned cash to some purpose. Mr Warton was advised that it was likely the mines were going to close down, so he got out of the hotel business as quick as he could; and went back to the stage. He has been an actor ever since, and is usually cast as a "heavy" in Australian films.

During the Centenary air race Dick Garner, who is business manager of Cinesound, received a cable from Paris to the effect: "Rush pictures to Londres." In the excitement of the moment Dick believed that Londres was a competitor in the air race, and wired Melbourne to see that they secured pictures of him.<sup>18</sup>

Good news of Elaine Hamill's work on location at Camden. It is reported of the New Zealand girl, who has the lead in the new Cinesound picture, "Grandad Rudd," that she is pleasant to work with, willing to learn, and is keen on her job—all of which is a fine compliment.<sup>19</sup>

The camera work was completed by 28 November,<sup>20</sup> after only 33 days of shooting.

Elaine performed on stage in the John Warwick production of *Sometimes Even Now*. The theatre critic Helga Rolunde, born Helga Rolunde Johnston in Hamilton, had lived with her parents in Te Kuiti for some years.<sup>21</sup> She wrote,

"Sometimes Even Now," produced by John Warwick at the Savoy Theatre, the first effort of the Cinema Academy Dramatic Club. In the lead, Elaine Hamill, the young New Zealander, who has the ingenue role in the latest Cinesound picture, "Grand-dad Rudd."

Now it is a very difficult thing to criticise the initial stage performance of a girl with whom one made "pot-hooks," sitting side by side in a New Zealand kindergarten twenty years ago, shared bird-nesting adventures, and fished for tadpoles knee-deep in communal mud—firm bonds.

Fortunately, Elaine Hamill's performance could have left no doubt as to her talent and possibilities in the minds of the audience. It was such that none could label "prejudiced," a favorable report.

The role, with its span of twenty years, was more than an average test of an actress's ability, calling, as it did, not only a like for ingénue sweetness, but for high emotional range. It must have been a great satisfaction to a young actress, on her first appearance in drama, to have

been able to sway her audience sufficiently to have them weeping with her.

Elaine Hamill has this point in her favor, as regards legitimate stage-work; she is one of those people rare these days, who have the qualities required in build, general appearance, and promise for a leading lady. There is work to be done in deportment and other directions, but there is time and to spare for that.<sup>22</sup>

She was still lending her name and image to products,



**MISS  
ELAINE  
HAMILL.**

The Beautiful Film Star soon to be seen in Cine-sound's new film, "Grandad Budd," is another of the lovely girls who use and recommend Mercolized Wax as the ideal skin and complexion beautifier.

**"Beauty is Merely a Matter of Knowing How"**



*MEET GRANDAD! Old man Rudd (Bert Bailey) gives the "once over" to Henry Cook (John Cameron), who is introduced by Betty (Elaine Hamil), a scene from Cinesound's new picture, "Grandad Rudd" just completed.*

*Daily Standard (Brisbane) 19 December 1934.*



## Flowers o' the Sea

"COME underneath my big umbrella, little girls!" Perhaps Miss Elaine Hamill (left) and Miss Betty Brand resolved this invitation. So they converted the umbrella. Anyway, its gay waving stripes and var also make it an enviable acquisition, however it got into the picture. In their colorful costumes, so brilliantly set, the girls look like lovely sea anemones bowing on the seashore.



Elaine Hamill, *Table Talk* (Melbourne) 9 May 1935.



A ROMANTIC story runs through "Grandad Rudd." Cinesound's latest production, just completed, Elaine Hamill is Betty, who eventually wears the bridal veil.

Newcastle Sun 29 December 1934.

*Australian Women's Weekly* 29 December 1934; "BEACH WEAR FOR 1935. Miss Hamill is wearing a cape and wrap-over skirt of white towelling with her pareo of gaily-printed cotton."

Elaine came home to Taihape: "Elaine Hamill is visiting her people in New Zealand for Christmas and returns to Sydney on January 11 to fulfil a new engagement, which for the present is being kept a secret," whispered Helga Rolunde in the *Sun*,<sup>24</sup> and the *Manawatu Standard* told its readers,

Miss Elaine Hamill, formerly a member of the nursing staff of the Dannevirke Hospital, who is a screen actress in Sydney, is spending a short holiday at Taihape, her home town.<sup>25</sup>



## **FILM INDUSTRY IN N.Z. SURE TO START, SAYS ACTRESS**

Miss Elaine Hamill, feminine lead in the Cinesound production, "Grandad Rudd," shortly to be presented in Sydney, returned to Sydney by the Union Co.'s Maunganui.

Miss Hamill, who has been to New Zealand with her parents for a holiday, said that although at present there was no move to produce motion pictures in New Zealand, she was sure that the industry would be begun within the next two years.

Although unable to disclose the nature of the production, Miss Hamill expects to start work on a new picture for Cinesound almost immediately.<sup>26</sup>

The New Zealand marketing of *Grandad Rudd* emphasised Elaine Hamill's involvement,

According to a Commonwealth critic: —"For every one person amongst the tens of thousands of people who saw and enjoyed 'On Our Selection,' ten are going to see and enjoy 'Grandad Rudd.' it is the funniest thing that has been shown in New Zealand, its humour is absolutely irresistible"; indeed, at a recent trade show, even the most critical of critics was too helpless with laughter to gasp out anything but "Splendid, absolutely splendid." Of very special interest to New Zealanders, and of great interest to everybody who admires beauty and charm, is Elaine Hamill, the twenty-two-year-old New Zealand girl who plays the feminine lead in 'Grandad Rudd.' The combination of her unusual beauty, charming manner, and lovely speaking voice, would be enough to lift this picture above the average even if it were an ordinary picture.<sup>27</sup>

**WORLD PREMIERE.  
RELEASE IN AUCKLAND.**

For the first time a film is to be given its "world premiere" in Auckland. The production is "Grandad Rudd," which is to be released here on February 15, before it is seen even in Sydney, where it was made. It stars Bert Bailey, whom audiences saw in "On Our Selection," and is in effect a sequel to that hilarious comedy of Australian farm life.

Of special interest to New Zealanders is the appearance of a 22-year-old Taihape girl, Elaine Hamill, in the feminine lead. She is said to possess a combination of striking beauty, charming manner and fine speaking voice. Molly Raynor, veteran of the stage, and already well known in Australia's infant screen industry, has a first-class comedy role as a giggling, gawky would-be "vamp."<sup>28</sup>

*Grandad Rudd* also had a "world premiere" at the Prince of Wales theatre in Perth on 1 February, when it was "witnessed by a large audience".<sup>29</sup>

Elaine was appreciated in South Australia,

**Prettiest Girl Seen In Australian Film**

"Grandad Rudd," Cinesound's latest production, has in its cast the prettiest girl yet seen in an Australian-made film. She is Elaine Hamill, a youthful New Zealander, with natural charm and grace and a pleasing voice. She was acclaimed last-night when the film was previewed at the Mayfair Theatre.

Miss Hamill is that comparatively rare person, a beauty who photographs well, and Capt Frank Hurley, head cameraman for the Cinesound outfit, has caught many attractive glimpses of this singularly lovely young woman.<sup>30</sup>

N.Z.'s Pre-eminent Theatre.

## THE REGENT

Direction:  
J. C. Williamson Picture Corporation, Ltd.

Sessions: 11 a.m., 2.15 and 8 p.m.

**BY CRIPES! . . . IT'S TIME  
AUCKLAND HAD ANOTHER  
DARNED GOOD LAUGH!**

**AND OH! GEE! HOW YOU'RE  
GOING TO GET IT! . . . . .**

— FRIDAY NEXT —

Dad, Mum, Dave, Sarah 'n' Everybody, all of Steele Rudd's famous characters back again in a roarin' weller of wonderful comedy . . . Dad's in clover . . . has made his pile, and he's still the darndest, stingiest, crankiest old coos that ever drove a family to desperation!

Cinecours Present

"GRANDAD RUDD"  
"GRANDAD RUDD"  
"GRANDAD RUDD"  
"GRANDAD RUDD"  
"GRANDAD RUDD"  
"GRANDAD RUDD"  
"GRANDAD RUDD"  
"GRANDAD RUDD"  
"GRANDAD RUDD"  
"GRANDAD RUDD"

With

**BERT BAILEY**

As Grandad Rudd, Esq.

**FRED McDONALD,**

Once more the Inestimable Dave.

**ELAINE HAMILL,**

And a Batch of Favourites.

You'll roar from first to last at more funny incidents than you'd find in ten years of Smith's Weekly's "Rudd's v. Regan's Cricket Match (Rudd's Rules), What a match! The bolting tractor turns the farm into a riot . . . Dave's request for 'another ten bob' . . . Dad's over indulgence at the Local Pub . . . then on the Rampage . . . and still gets the last word. Laughs . . . they multiply faster than rabbits in the Spring . . . It's the Greatest Entertainment in Comedy Presentation in Auckland for Years!

**STERRUTH, AIN'T DAD A BEAUT!**

### AMUSEMENTS

— TO-DAY —

#### ROAR AT THE RUCIOUS RUDD'S!

Once more Steele Rudd's hilarious character comedy comes to screen. Back here in Auckland . . . in that ever inimitable quaver they bring the most abjectly comical series of incidents you've ever seen depicted on the Theatre!

N.Z.'s Pre-eminent Theatre.

## THE REGENT

J. C. Williamson Picture Corporation, Ltd.

Sessions: 11 a.m., 2.15, 8 and 8 p.m.  
Summer Session To-day at 5 p.m.

#### EXCITATINGLY FUNNY! WHIRLWIND ENTERTAINMENT!

Who could bring more laughs than this great big booted family? . . . Dad, Dave, Sarah, Mum, all of 'em, 'n' a catterin' weller of wonderful comedy! (and brings average pleasure and enjoyment for everybody!)



With

**BERT BAILEY**  
**BERT BAILEY**

Steele Rudd's original "Dad" as Grandad Rudd, Esq.

**FRED McDONALD,**  
Again the Inestimable "Dave."

**ELAINE HAMILL,**

N.Z.'s own charming dainties,  
And a Batch of Favourites.

#### ROAR!

At the Rudd's v. Regan's cricket match (Rudd's Rules).

#### YELL!

At the bolting tractor wrecks the farmyard!

#### SCREAM!

As Dad falls up at the local public house, there's never been so many gentlemen's fancy landings in one day before! Dad's in clover, he doesn't work any more and he's just a party about the place! Cripes! Why he a Jewed, says Dave, 'n' Cripes, Cripes! (and the family in desperation and Dave to drink!)

(Approved for National Exhibition.)

— BOOKING IS HEAVY —

Make Your Reservations Now!  
Times at Regent (Phone 46-088).



For the greatest laughter treat of your life meet "Grandad Rudd" (Bert Bailey) in the film of that name at the Plaza Theatre on Saturday, March 30, and April 1 and 2. The charming young lady is Elaine Hamill.<sup>31</sup>



*Grandad Rudd* was released in England renamed *Ruling the Roost*. It was not a great success anywhere.

◀ *Labor Daily* (Sydney) 21 February 1935.

*News* (Adelaide) 18 April 1935. ▶



ELAINE HAMILL, the beautiful young Australian actress, who has an important part in "Grandad Rudd," coming to the York on Saturday.

## A Young FILM STAR Shows Some FASHIONS



**M**ISS ELAINE HAMILI, the young New Zealander, who, shortly after she came to Sydney, secured a contract with Cinesound, is shown here in some varied fashions. In two pictures she posed in beach wear, and for the third she changed into a very smart five-o'clock gown, the new name for the cocktail suit. On the top left she wears a play suit of light jersey weave in Roman stripes. In addition to well-cut shorts it shows a high neck front with back straps which button to the shoulder and a black flat crape with white spots, trimmed with stiff white voire ribbon. The frock is buckles and the short jacket with pencil sleeves shows a larger spot. Below is a surf suit of the brassiere type in grotto blue with white rope trimmings, and the silver surf helmet cap is a particularly smart note.

—BY GUYTON THOMAS, 144.



*Australian Women's Weekly 26 January 1935.*



Elaine Hamill, the young New Zealand girl, who is given her first chance in film work in the new Cinesound-Bert Bailey comedy, "Grandad Rudd."  
*Western Mail* (Perth) 31 January 1935.

She was finding work on radio too, as Sydney's *Labor Daily* told its readers,

## **N.Z. GIRL'S TALENT RADIO AND FILM SUCCESSES**

NOT so many months ago Elaine Hamill, a young New Zealand girl with a flair for amateur acting, decided to book her passage for Sydney.

Her hopes have been justified in an amazingly short time, for this ambitious young woman has already played the feminine lead in "Grandad Rudd," appeared in "Blue Mountain Melody," become a prominent radio actress, and one of Sydney's leading mannequins.

**But perhaps her biggest achievement was to win, from 1300 competitors, the feminine section of a big personality contest launched by a leading Australian women's paper.**

Before coming to Australia, she was engaged in nursing, in which profession she has completed her training. One of her most vivid experiences was during the earthquake at Napie a few years ago, when she was the only one of seven to escape when the nurses' home at the hospital where she was training collapsed.

Elaine Hamill prefers modern sophisticated dramatic roles, although listeners will agree, after hearing her as Lydia Languish in Sheridan's play, "The Rivals," and as Lady Rowena in the new A.B.C. serial, "Ivanhoe," that she can portray those roles most charmingly and capably.<sup>32</sup>





Elaine Hamill: *Australian Women's Weekly* 9 March 1935.

In June she was on stage in her first professional role in Philip Lewis's Professional Repertory production *The Shining Hour*,

---

SAVOY THEATRE BLIQH-STREET.  
 Phillip Lewis presents his Second Professional Repertory Production,  
 A WORTHY SUCCESSOR TO "THE GREEN BAY TREE."  
**"THE SHINING HOUR," TO-NIGHT, TUESDAY, THURSDAY**  
 BY KEITH WINTER. NEXT AT 8.  
 With  
**HARVEY ADAMS, SYBIL DAVIDSON, ELAINE HAMILL, LESLIE VICTOR,**  
 WINIFRED GREEN. PRODUCED BY GEORGE D. PARKER. PHILLIP LEWIS.  
 PRICES, 5/., 3/., 'PHONE, 85327 FOR RESERVATIONS.

---

The *Sydney Morning Herald* critic: "Elaine Hamill's Mariella was all softness and dreamy charm in the first half of the play. Yet this character developed impressively as time went on."<sup>33</sup>

ELAINE HAMILL, out of the blue, via New Zealand!

Sydney seldom has been faced with a leading lady ready-made. There have been manufactured ones, but not one with all the natural graces. The Fragonard beauty, poise, elegance and exquisite voice of Elaine Hamill in "The Shining Hour" at the Savoy Theatre, with an uncanny knack of getting all her inflections just right, proclaim a real rising star. If Australia does not want her, London or New York will hold out inviting arms. She probably gained her poise from her experience of nursing after the Napier earthquake, but the rest is nature's gift to an actress born.<sup>34</sup>

"In a difficult role she looked exquisite, and played with increasing sincerity as the dramatic intensity of the play developed," said the *Daily Telegraph*.<sup>35</sup>

She played in *Roberta* in Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide, rooming with Whangarei born actor Lesley Crane;<sup>36</sup> thence to Melbourne,

## NURSE—ACTRESS.

### TWO VERY DIFFERENT THEATRES.

#### Elaine Hamill's Remarkable Success.

Although less than eighteen months ago the only theatre in which she had been called upon to play any sort of role was the operating theatre at Napier (N.Z.) hospital, Miss Elaine Hamill, who arrived in Melbourne on Saturday to play the lead in the J. C. Williamson production of *The Shining Hour*, is already counted in stage circles as a most promising young actress. The story of how she threw her first profession—nursing—

*Star of "The Shining Hour"*



MISS ELAINE HAMILL, young Australian actress, who will play the leading role in "The Shining Hour" at the Comedy Theatre on September 7, photographed on her arrival today in the Adelaide express.

to the winds, left her Taihape home to carve a career for herself in Australia, and within a few weeks descended on the theatrical world of Sydney sounds more like fiction than fact—especially with the "happy ending" of starring in straight plays and films in sight!

Miss Hamill explains it away as "pure luck"! She said she had taken up nursing only as a stop-gap, while waiting for a chance to begin the stage career she had always promised herself. On completing three and a half years' nursing training in the Napier Hospital—and incidentally doing splendid volunteer work in the earthquake—she came to Sydney to study dramatic art at the Cinema Academy, and to mark time with mannequin work and

broadcasting. Then she annexed a small part, in *Blue Mountain Melody*, won a personality contest, and the lead in the film *Granddad Rudd* followed with later more broadcasting and repertory work. More recently she has been playing in *Roberta*, in Perth and Adelaide, and on the expiry of her contract with J. C. Williamson, she plans to return to Sydney to take up film work. Her Melbourne debut will be in the role that Gladys Cooper is now playing in the London performance of *The Shining Hour*, to be presented at the Comedy here on 7th September.<sup>37</sup>



Elaine Hamill: *Table Talk* (Melbourne) 12 September 1935

Stanley Parker, theatre critic for Melbourne's *Table Talk*, interviewed her (and sketched a caricature),

**WHEN** I called round to congratulate Elaine Hamill on her great success of the previous night, she was still aglow with excitement. And who could blame her? It **WAS** an extraordinary experience for such an inexperienced girl.

“But of course I have thought **THEATRE** ever since I can remember,” she explained. “Even when I was a tiny tot I used to ‘dress up,’ and play act. And then later I went to every theatre I could possibly manage, and read everything that was even remotely connected with the stage——”

“Then why on earth,” I asked, “did you become a nurse?”

The question seemed to floor her. She hesitated. “Do you really want to know?” she asked. “Then I’ll tell you. Only you must promise never to tell a soul, and if you do I’ll shoot you.”



(I promised, readily; but all's fair in love, war and journalism.)

"I became a nurse because," she took a deep breath, and then plunged on, "because I was a silly vain little girl who liked the look of herself with a snowy white handkerchief round her head. There!"

She seemed to expect me to be appalled at her terrible self-denunciation, and I think she was more disappointed than anything else when I laughed.

"There were other reasons also," she went on, "I thought how beautiful it would be to bring sunshine into darkened hopeless lives, smoothing a crinkled pillow here, soothing a fevered forehead there, arranging flowers and singing softly about the place, so that all my patients would say 'Blessed. BLESSED Nurse Hamill, she's just like a little angel about the place.' I wanted to be, in short, a very modern super-streamlined edition of Florence Nightingale.

"But of the years of gruelling hard work, the suffering, pain, the hardships and real service, I didn't give a thought.

"I hadn't been a nurse long, however, before I began to grow up, and the woman I became is, I hope, unrecognisable from the shallow little flapper I was. As a nurse I learned to look at life in the raw without flinching, to deal with primitive fundamental facts and not fantasies, to subserviate my own little histrionic ambitions to a common cause. And, if not to love, at least to understand Humanity.

Of course, back of my mind there was still the stage, but it did not seem so very important now, only a sort of glorified form of exhibitionism (Oh, I had Freudian names for everything)! Then, on one never to be forgotten 'day off' I saw Sybil Thorndike in 'The Medea.' and realised how noble and majestic and

uplifting great art can be. I realised, too, long before The Medea sped off on her fiery chariot, that I would leave the hospital and go on the stage.

“With courage born of my new decision I stalked round to Dame Sybil’s dressing room and explained to her that she, by her wonderful acting, had made it impossible for me to carry on with my life, that I wouldn’t, and what was she going to do about it?

“She was marvellous to me. When she realised that I was in earnest she sat down straight away, in those wonderful fabulous robes of flame, and wrote me half a dozen letters of introduction.

“‘Here is a letter to an influential man in Auckland,’ she said, in her quick, decisive way, ‘But you won’t stay there long; you will go to Sydney. Here is a letter to a film company in Sydney. After that, there will be Melbourne. Here is a letter to the Taits. In case, on your way to England, you want work, present this in Cape Town, and they might do something for you. And, when you get to London, give Lewis (her husband), this note of reminder, and, if you are any good at all, we’ll put you into a show, And now, my dear, enthusiastic young lady, I must take off my make up and say ‘Good-bye,’ and you must hurry away, too, and make a great success. Otherwise, I shall look such a damn fool.’

“Need I tell you that I walked home on air? I went straight to my father, and said, ‘Lend me some money; I’m going, on the stage.’ He saw I was determined. so he did.

“Since then I have had many experiences. In Sydney, after my money ran out (I had only sufficient for six weeks) I became a shop girl. Then, a big step up, a mannequin. From this it was an obvious step to contestant in a beauty competition. And winning the competition (oh, the thrill of THAT!), I was chosen for

the feminine lead in ‘Granddad Rudd.’ Having gained confidence, I felt I was ready to learn to walk the stage, and entered the ‘Blue Mountain Melody’ company as a chorus girl. When Jean Duncan left the cast of ‘Roberta’ I asked for her role. (I knew them all, and could have gone on for Cyril Ritchard if necessary), I got it, and a valuable lot of experience, too. But I didn’t want to spend my life in musical comedy, so I threw up a professional engagement for a repertory one, a big dramatic role in ‘The Shining Hour. My luck was in, for among the audience on that first night was Mr Tait, who sent for me, and said, ‘How would you like to play the same role in a specially selected company, opening in Melbourne soon?’ And here I am!”<sup>38</sup>

Nonetheless Parker was not impressed with her acting,

Elaine Hamill as Mariella is weak. Her level-headed feminine logic is supposed to counterbalance David’s emotional instability, but it is not convincing. She is beautiful to look at and moves like a goddess (or a mannequin) and speaks her lines clearly (if a trifle fruitily). But she did not succeed in achieving the impossible. For it is quite impossible for a comparatively inexperienced girl to give the impression of a poised and infinitely mature intellect. Here was no sophisticated woman of the world swept off her mondaine feet by an all-conquering love, but a rather bored young wife looking for diversion. And her clothes (Chinese coats and sequins in a Yorkshire farmhouse) did not have the desired effect of stressing her sophistication, but the very opposite.<sup>39</sup>

Others must have been more so,

Melbourne playgoers were captivated at the opening performance of “The Shining Hour” at the Comedy



Theatre by the new J. C. Williamson young leading lady, Elaine Hamill. This young artist, who comes from New Zealand, is amazingly beautiful, and in the big role she played with such effect that, in several scenes, the audience interrupted with applause. The newspaper critics have praised her as a “find,” and one who will make a place for herself as a star. At the end of the performance she was loaded with flowers, and her dressing-room was crowded with playgoers who had come to tender their congratulations.<sup>40</sup>

*The Shining Hour* finished and Elaine was noticed in the Melbourne social scene,

But to get back to Mrs Poolman’s party. Elaine Hamill was there looking as distinctive as ever in her favorite color, black (and no wonder when she is so strikingly fair) with a “visor” eye veil on her tiny black toque.<sup>41</sup>

Her next play was *Sixteen* and the Melbourne *Herald* enthused about her frocks,

With her poise, distinctive good looks and soignée appearance, Elaine Hamill was perfectly cast as Jennifer Lawrence, the mannequin and model saleswoman in “Sixteen,” which opened at the Comedy Theatre on Saturday night.

Her clothes were disarmingly simple-looking. The smart travelling frock with its unusual checks, large stiffened linen collar and cuffs, and accompanying tailored black hat, was a model of correctness, while her lovely white evening gown with its sophisticated draperies and powdering of glistening diamante must have made every woman in the audience envious.

Not only were all her suits attractive, but Miss Hamill added to her charm a capacity for wearing clothes well.

She appeared to be at home in each garment in turn, although they were all quite different.<sup>42</sup>

The critics were impressed too—even *Table Talk* was positive,

Elaine Hamill showed a surprising improvement in her work, compared with her performance in “The Shining Hour.” She gave a quiet and very effective rendering of the role of Jennifer Lawrence, and, despite the fact that in real life she is only three years older than her youngest daughter of the play, she didn’t look incongruously young, as mothers look these days!<sup>43</sup>

Elaine Hamill, as Jennifer Lawrence, the mother, finds herself in “Sixteen,” in a much more finished performance than she has given hitherto. Her role was not on easy one, requiring considerable emotion to be played with great restraint. The sentiment was a little heavy-handed at times. Miss Hamill has acquired much more ease and grace of movement, and it was pleasing to see frocking much better chosen this time, to suit her unusual good-looks.<sup>44</sup>



*Table Talk* published a special feature showing some of the many faces of Elaine Hamill.



"Rather Amusing"



"I Wonder"



Just Her Natural Self



Definitely Alluring



"Frankly, I don't believe you."  
And (right) "Afraid I don't  
understand."



From *Table Talk*  
(Melbourne)  
7 November 1935.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* summed up,

Elaine Hamill, who was first seen in Phillip Lewis's production of "The Shining Hour," has repeated her success in Melbourne with J. C. Williamson. I predict a career for this New Zealand girl either on the stage or in films. She has one tremendous asset, beauty; but that alone would be useless without intelligence and grit.<sup>45</sup>



"MISS ELAINE HAMILL has had a measure of success on the stage and in films in Australia." *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 November 1935.



“A TYPICAL Australian beauty, Miss Elaine Hamill....”  
*Australian Women's Weekly* 16 November 1935.

She joined the cast of the new film *Thoroughbred* in Sydney, “Did You Know That Elaine Hamill, New Zealand beauty, wears jet-black wig in ‘Thoroughbred’ as contrast to blondes in cast? Elaine’s looks survive any treatment.”<sup>46</sup>

On stage she was cast in JC Williamson’s production of the Emyln Williams play *Night Must Fall* at the Comedy Theatre in Melbourne.<sup>47</sup>



“ELAINE HAMILL, who has a leading part in ‘Night Must Fall’...”

*Herald* (Melbourne)  
8 February 1936.

She didn’t please the critics:

Miss Hamill... played with conviction, but when she kissed the subject of her infatuation in the final scene she lost character, and at the same time cheapened the drama in its essential impact. The inconsistency of Olivia, who is all important in the action, represents the play’s chief weakness, as produced.<sup>48</sup>

... it cannot be said that she makes the most of her opportunities in it, and her good looks make it hard for

us to see her as the plain, mouse-like person Olivia is meant to be.<sup>49</sup>

Elaine Hamill tries valiantly to transform herself into a plain looking female, but it would take more than hair scragged back and horn rimmed spectacles to disguise her beauty.<sup>50</sup>

No beauty given less opportunity to “show off” than Elaine Hamill... Having completed work in film where appearances marred by black wig, Elaine next appearing before public in Emlyn Williams’ thriller, “Night Must Fall”... Elaine’s lovely blue eyes to be hidden behind horn-rimmed glasses and blonde locks scraped back in severest fashion... Clothes extremely simple... Notwithstanding handicaps, Elaine’s looks not quite extinguished.<sup>51</sup>

*Night Must Fall* opened at Sydney’s Theatre Royal on 20 March.



Beautiful Elaine Hamill, New Zealand actress, who has a prominent role in Emlyn Williams's "Night Must Fall," which opens at the Theatre Royal on Saturday.

*Daily Telegraph* (Sydney)  
18 March 1936.



**DRAMA Comes to  
HIS MAJESTY'S THEATRE  
EASTER SATURDAY  
J. C. WILLIAMSON LTD.  
PRESENTS  
THE DRAMATIC  
SENSATION OF THE  
STAGE**

A Masterpiece That Will Be Discussed for Years to Come!

**THRILLING! CHILLING!  
BAFFLING! EXCITING!**

**"NIGHT  
MUST  
FALL"**

By EMLYN WILLIAMS.  
"Night Must Fall," which is packing the Theatre Royal nightly in Sydney, will be interpreted by the following stars—

**ETHEL MORRISON,  
ELAINE HAMILL,  
LLOYD LAMBIE.**

Harvey Adams, Campbell Copelin,  
Phyllis Baker, Norman Shepherd,  
Erna Living, Fred Hollins, etc.

Prices to suit every playgoer—  
Nights, 4, 4, 3, 2. Matinee, 3,  
3, 2. Preferential Booking applica-  
tions now being received. Plans  
open Spring's Tuesday, April 7.

"ELAINE HAMILL dons spectacles and brushes her hair from her forehead in an effort to look unattractive for her role in "Night Must Fall," Royal.

*Truth* (Sydney) 22 March 1936.

"It was not without amusement that the audience heard this well-known beauty proclaim the lines, 'I am plain and have no friends.'"<sup>52</sup>





Detail of caricature by Kerwin MacGraith: "Elaine Hamill as Olivia Grayne, the secretary."

*Sydney Mail* 25 March 1936.



Harvey Adams and Elaine Hamill in *Night Must Fall*.  
*Telegraph* (Brisbane) 2 April 1936.

### **DRAMA AT THE ROYAL**

**DARKNESS**, a sudden gasp quickly suppressed: laughter, that sweeps the audience suddenly, and a laugh that hides a sob. The final curtain, complete silence, then applause; applause, while the artists acknowledge curtain after curtain.

Ethel Morrison has discarded invalid appurtenances and makes a pleasant little speech to the audience: Elaine Hamill, no longer bespectacled and difficult, but a golden-haired lovely girl, aglow with excitement: Lloyd Lamble, his hair tousled, but no longer the murderer, is revealed as a pleasant young man, a little surprised perhaps at the excitement still echoing to the furthest corners of the theatre: Harvey Adams, suave, kindly, bowing dignified acknowledgment: Campbell Copelin,

Erna Living, Phyllis Baker and Norma Shepherd sharing the honors.

J. C. Williamson have put on, in common parlance, a straight show, and drama lovers have assembled to acclaim the work of Emyln Williams, playwright, Gregan McMahon, producer, and an excellent cast. "Night Must Fall." Royal.<sup>53</sup>

## ANNUAL TORTOISE-WEIGHING



"MISS ELAINE HAMILL, charming New Zealand girl, now appearing in J.C. Williamson productions, weighing one of the tortoises at the Zoo yesterday. They are weighed and measured annually, and the data sent to New York Aquarium, whence they originally came, but it is not often the weigher is like this."

*Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 3 April 1936.

## VEILED TOQUE



A PROMISING young Australian actress, Miss Elaine HAMILL, poses here in one of the new film star hats from Ashley's. The model has a clever forward tilt, and is finished with a becoming fine mesh veil.

—Daily Telegraph Photo.

*Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 2 April 1936.

## CHINESE INFLUENCE



THE CHINESE influence is apparent in this unusually smart hat from Ashley's worn by Miss Elaine Hamill. It is made of fine black felt, with the turned-up brim finished with black satin. A scarlet tassel adorns the front of the crown.

—The Daily Telegraph.

*Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 16 April 1936.



*Pretty, practical, and fairminded: three pictures of Miss Elaine Hamill. Miss Hamill is appearing for the first time in Sydney under J. C. Williamson management in an important part in "Night Must Fall" at the Theatre Royal, but she is far from being unknown in Sydney. Her work in the Little Theatres and in model and mannequin engagements has made her pretty face a familiar one, but the practical side to her nature is realized when one hears that although she has always cherished stage ambitions, she took the practicalities of training as a nurse in New Zealand before she attempted the more glamorous and less certain path to stage fame. In the three pictures above we see her first as we know her best, then in the uniform of her earlier profession, and finally as she appears in "Night Must Fall."*

*Sydney Mail* 1 April 1936



**ELAINE HAMILL.**

The beautiful young New Zealand actress, who will have an unusual role in "Night Must Fall," the London dramatic play, to be staged at His Majesty's Theatre by J. C. Williamson Ltd. on Easter Saturday.

They played a two week season in Brisbane in April: "The young actress rose to dramatic heights, tracing a keenly definitive line," said the *Courier-Mail* critic of *The Shining Hour*. She also played in *Fresh Fields*.

*Courier-Mail* (Brisbane)  
2 April 1936.

The *Courier-Mail* interviewed her.

Tucked under the arm of Miss Elaine Hamill, was a toy black Scotch terrier, named "Scotty," which was a souvenir handed over the footlights, and travels with her everywhere. The young star's fair colouring was set off by a grey flannel suit with a black hat and a black satin cowed blouse held with an antique brooch with a large green stone. Thus her two favourite colours, of black and green, were both introduced into her costume. Miss Hamill's rise to stardom has been quick, since her stage experience has covered little more than 12 months, but she attributes it to hard work as much as to any natural ability. Lots and lots of hard work, and a good memory, she considers some of the requisites for an actress, and she added, "You can't burn the candle at both ends, either, even though you might like to." A New Zealander by birth, Miss Hamill is looking forward to the company's season in her native country, which will follow the short return season they will give in Sydney. While in Brisbane, Miss Hamill is staying at Selwyn.<sup>54</sup>



ELAINE HAMILL

Charming studies of the beautiful young New Zealand actress who scores a big success in the J. C. Williamson Ltd. production of "The Shining Hour," at His Majesty's Theatre.

She was still modelling commercially,

## ELAINE HAMILL

*The Beautiful J. C. Williamson  
Artiste at His Majesty's,*

### Favours the Warmth of a Woollen Jumper

Beautiful Elaine Hamill, another J. C. Williamson "find" now in the vanguard of international stage fame, and lead in "Night Must Fall," "The Shining Hour," and "Fresh Fields," is one of the sponsors of the "Woollen Jumper for smartness" craze in the South. It suits her admirably, too.

Just as surely as "Night Must Fall" you'll eventually change to the beautiful flavour of Highfield Tea. So we suggest that you improve "The Shining Hour" and look for "Fresh Fields" by changing to-day to

SEEKING STARS WITH HIGHFIELD



# HIGHFIELD

THE TEA  
OF GOOD TASTE

*Sunday Mail* (Brisbane) 19 April 1936.

In May 1936 the film *Thoroughbred* was released,

**“THOROUGHbred”  
AN AUSTRALIAN PICTURE**

Special interest is contained for Cambridge picture-goers in “Thoroughbred,” the main attraction tonight and tomorrow, in that the cast includes Miss Elaine Hamill, whose parents, Mr and Mrs J. F. Hamill, are at present living in Cambridge.



“Thoroughbred,” produced by Cinesound as Australia’s first “world production,” is a thrill-teeming racing tale without the equine hero winning the big race and paying off the scoundrel mortgage-holder. Intrinsicly it is a story of a blueblood and thoroughbreds—both human and four-footed—a story that packs all the glamour, excitement, suspense and comedy of the Sport of Kings into one unforgettable entertainment.

“Ma” Dawson, a veteran “battler” of the racecourse, disputes the contentions of Russell Peel, the most aristocratic breeder of aristocratic horses. The old gentleman insists that blueblood is supreme. “Ma” prefers red blood. A thirty years’ war is waged on the subject, until Jean, acknowledged a blueblood red-blood, settles the dispute once and for all.

The tale is an analogy of a thoroughbred woman and a thoroughbred horse. Both are champions, but Tommy Dawson, a self-admitted “big shot” on the racecourse, knows as little about women as he does of gallopers.

Stormalong, a Peter Pan and a Phar Lap rolled into one, proves the wonder horse of the decade. The cast includes Helen Twelvetrees, Frank Leighton, John Longden, Nellie Barnes and Elaine Hamill.<sup>55</sup>

But it was greeted with lukewarm appraisal,

Opening as comedy, with many “gag” scenes unrelated to the main thread of the story, it gains force and excitement, if not logic, with its change into frank melodrama. Seward’s dialogue bristles with popular wisecracks, many of them too labored. In the serious speeches, there is an unexpected stiltedness. Apparently the script has been altered. For a lack of clarity in the course of the plot, and in the standing of several characters, exacts a large amount of “imaginative

bridging” from the audience. As a competitor in the world-market, “Thoroughbred” does not fulfil all expectations.<sup>56</sup>

Mr. Frank Leighton does all that can be done with a thankless, colourless, and rather muddled part. Miss Nellie Barnes and Miss Elaine Hamill, too, are remarkable for the promise they show, rather than for anything the film actually allows them to achieve.<sup>57</sup>

The JC Williamson company was planning to go to Auckland after the short Sydney season and Melbourne’s *Sporting Globe* poked some fun at Sydney and New Zealand,

The Shining Hour will play only 19 nights in Bridgopolis, before hopping to Nooseeland, where Elaine Hamill will be starred as local highlight. That may cause local tremors.<sup>58</sup>

The Brisbane *Telegraph* remarked wryly,

The... company..., headed by Elaine Hamill, may then go to New Zealand with the three plays in their repertoire as “the firm” had great success with the company that played “Wind and the Rain” in Maoriland last year. Someone has suggested that the “Wind and the Rain” success might have been due to the fact that it was written by a New Zealander, thus explaining the non-success of “The Perfect Alibi” its co-partner, but they are forgetting that Elaine Hamill and also Ethel Morrison, who is soon joining the cast, are both New Zealanders and should thus guarantee the success of the whole three plays.<sup>59</sup>

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- 1 *Horowhenua Chronicle* 31 October 1934.
  - 2 *Thames Star* 23 May 1933.
  - 3 <https://www.imdb.com/name/nm0850029/>
  - 4 *Sun* (Sydney) 22 Apr 1934.
  - 5 *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 29 Jun 1934.
  - 6 Andrew Franklin Pike 1972. The history of an Australian film production company: Cinesound, 1932–1970. MA thesis, ANU, Canberra.  
[https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/109798/2/b10157529-pike\\_A\\_F.pdf](https://openresearch-repository.anu.edu.au/bitstream/1885/109798/2/b10157529-pike_A_F.pdf)
  - 7 *Horowhenua Chronicle* 31 October 1934.
  - 8 *Stratford Evening Post* 6 February 1935.
  - 9 *Manawatu Standard* 20 December 1934.
  - 10 *Australian Women's Weekly* 6 October 1934.
  - 11 *Sun* (Sydney) 7 October 1934.
  - 12 *Horowhenua Chronicle* 31 October 1934.
  - 13 *Australian Women's Weekly* 13 October 1934.
  - 14 *Australian Women's Weekly* 20 October 1934.
  - 15 *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 21 November 1934.
  - 16 *Manawatu Standard* 14 November 1934.
  - 17 [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grandad\\_Rudd](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grandad_Rudd)
  - 18 *Huon and Derwent Times* (Tasmania) 22 November 1934.
  - 19 *Sun* (Sydney) 25 November 1934.
  - 20 *Sydney Morning Herald* 28 November 1934.
  - 21 *King Country Chronicle* 11 June 1935.
  - 22 *Sun* (Sydney) 2 December 1934.
  - 23 *Australian Women's Weekly* 15 December 1934.
  - 24 *Sun* 30 December 1934.
  - 25 *Manawatu Standard* 29 December 1934.
  - 26 *Labor Daily* (Sydney) 14 January 1935.
  - 27 *Evening Star* (Dunedin) 9 February 1935.
  - 28 *Auckland Star* 9 February 1935.
  - 29 *West Australian* (Perth) 2 February 1935.
  - 30 *News* (Adelaide) 11 February 1935.
  - 31 *Stratford Evening Post* 21 March 1935.
  - 32 *Labor Daily* (Sydney) 18 February 1935.
  - 33 *Sydney Morning Herald* 4 June 1935.
  - 34 *Sun* (Sydney) 8 June 1935.
  - 35 *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 8 June 1935.
  - 36 *Northern Advocate* 23 November 1935.

- 
- 37 *Age* (Melbourne) 26 August 1935.  
38 *Table Talk* (Melbourne) 12 September 1935.  
39 *Table Talk* (Melbourne) 12 September 1935.  
40 *Queensland Figaro* 21 September 1935.  
41 *Table Talk* (Melbourne) 10 October 1935.  
42 *Herald* (Melbourne) 28 October 1935.  
43 *Table Talk* 31 October 1935.  
44 *Herald* (Melbourne) 28 October 1935.  
45 *Sydney Morning Herald* 14 November 1935.  
46 *Australian Women's Weekly* 28 December 1935.  
47 *Sun* (Sydney) 29 December 1935.  
48 *Age* (Melbourne) 17 February 1936.  
49 *Table Talk* 20 February 1936.  
50 *Table Talk* 20 February 1936.  
51 *Australian Women's Weekly* 21 March 1936.  
52 *Australian Women's Weekly* 28 March 1936.  
53 *Truth* (Sydney) Sun 29 March 1936.  
54 *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane) 13 April 1936.  
55 *Waikato Independent* 14 October 1937.  
56 *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 11 May 1936.  
57 *Sydney Morning Herald* 11 May 1936.  
58 *Sporting Globe* (Melbourne) 14 March 1936.  
59 *Telegraph* (Brisbane) 25 January 1936.

## Chapter 4: back in New Zealand

The New Zealand papers in the early weeks of 1936 were full of rumours of a New Zealand tour and at the end of February the *Evening Post* proudly gave the details,

### IMPORTANT THEATRICAL EVENT.

Easter in New Zealand will mark an important theatrical event, for Messrs. J. C. Williamson are sending a dramatic company to play a series of plays that have been highly successful in England, America, and Australia, and, moreover, are sending a New Zealand girl at the head of it. Elaine Hamill is a beautiful New Zealander of whom her native country has every reason to be proud. Only now in her early twenties, she is already an established star. Her career reads almost like a fairy tale, for it is not every actress who achieves her ambition. But Miss Hamill's uncommon beauty, rare intelligence, and undoubted stage ability have secured their own reward. Australian critics have raved over her exquisite charm, and predict a rosy future for the young lady who has burst upon the theatre world with all the brilliancy of an overseas' star. New Zealand audiences will admire her work tremendously, and marvel at her histrionic powers. The plays to be staged, opening at Auckland at Easter, will include "The Shining Hour," tense drama; "Fresh Fields," Ivor Novello's amusing comedy, set in fashionable London; and "Night Must Fall," a powerful crime drama by Emyln Williams, the Welsh actor-play-wright. All London, where "Night Must Fall" is a huge success, is talking about this play that has a most unusual theme—that of an angel-faced lover who has the soul of a murderer, and whose exploits cause drama about as tense as any audience could wish for. Miss Hamill plays Olivia Graye, the sweetheart of

the murderer, who is terrified of his mania, yet fascinated by his charm; and Lloyd Lamble plays Baby-faced Dan. Australian audiences are flocking to see this play, and Miss Hamill is credited with a flawless performance. Ethel Morrison and Harvey Adams are in the fine cast.<sup>1</sup>

Just about every newspaper in the country carried a brief biography of Taihape girl Elaine Hamill: the J.C. Williamson company publicity machine was very successful. In the event they opened in Wellington on 9 May.

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—GRAND OPERA HOUSE—

SEASON OF FAMOUS PLAYS

*Commences*

SATURDAY ——— MAY 9 ——— SATURDAY

When J. C. WILLIAMSON LTD. will present the

PLAY THAT IS STILL THRILLING ALL LONDON—

“NIGHT MUST FALL”

BY THE BRILLIANT ENGLISH PLAYWRIGHT EMLYN WILLIAMS.

(“Gosh, I’d like to have written ‘Night Must Fall,’” said a noted London Playwright and Critic.)

J. C. WILLIAMSON’S NEW DRAMATIC COMPANY.

Headed by

ETHEL MORRISON and ELAINE HAMILL

Together with

LLOYD LAMBLE,

HARVEY ADAMS, CAMPBELL COPELIN, KATIE TOWERS, NORMAN SHEPHERD, ENID HOLLINS, PHYLLIS BAKER, etc.

“NIGHT MUST FALL”

Will be followed by

Four Novello’s Priceless Comedy that simply split the sides of London audiences—

“FRESH FIELDS”

And

Keith Winter’s Captivating and Compelling Play—

“THE SHINING HOUR”

The reputation of J. C. WILLIAMSON LTD. is pledged with these plays, which have been selected from their vast repertoire of Famous London Successes.

BOX PLANS for “NIGHT MUST FALL” will open at the D.I.C. on Wednesday, May 6. Reserves: Stalls and D.C., 5/-; Unreserved, 4/- and 3/-; Gallery, 2/-; Late Doors, 1/6. Representative: Leo du Chateau.

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## ELAINE HAMILL.

### SUCCESSFUL N.Z. ACTRESS.

“Here is Miss Hamill now.” With these words, the porter announced Miss Elaine Hamill, the beautiful New Zealand actress who arrived at Wellington yesterday from Sydney, and who interrupted her unpacking to see a “Dominion” representative who called upon her at the somewhat early hour of 10 a.m. With a winning smile and outstretched hand she entered the lounge of her hotel, looking charming in the extreme—and one lost no time in deciding that it was little wonder she won the personality contest in Australia.

“Please excuse my looking anyhow,” she said. By “looking anyhow” she meant being perfectly turned out in a smartly-cut deep beige tailored suit of wool, a halo hat of almond green worn well off the face, and with a most provocative eye-veil, and a chic little cape of deep cinnamon summer ermine. A large filigree brooch, in the centre of which was a green transparent stone, was worn at the neckline, and the green was repeated in her art bracelet and smart handbag.

“It is lovely to be back in New Zealand, especially as my mother is here to see me,” Miss Hamill said. “Thank goodness we didn’t have a bad trip, so I’m not looking too worn out,” she added, and her interviewer made a mental note that any woman who could look so pretty and fresh at the hour of 10 a.m. —especially after having come off a steamer after three days at sea—could scarcely look worn out at any time.

Miss Hamill, who has not been in New Zealand for more than 18 months, has had considerable experience as a mannequin, both on and off the stage. She has always been keen on dramatic work and always wanted a stage career.

“I loved the mannequin work,” she added, “and it was wonderful training. Mind you, it is hard work—but so is everything if you want to succeed. You know, I have received letters and requests from numerous girls asking if there is scope for mannequin and stage work in Australia. There is; but they must be prepared for very hard work, and must not mind some failures.”

Speaking of the stage in Australia, Miss Hamill said that it was definitely coming back into its own once more. She felt very happy at being given the opportunities of appearing in a dramatic company. Her first stage appearance was in “Blue Mountain Melody,” with Madge Elliott and Cyril Ritchard, in which she was a show girl. Later she played in professional repertory and then replaced Jean Duncan as Sophie in “Roberta” (the part played in New Zealand by Diana du Cane). Then she was engaged to play in the company to which she now belongs. Her ambition is to do dramatic work, both on the stage and the films, and to go abroad.

Referring to her company, Miss Hamill said she felt proud to be associated with such finished artists as Miss Ethel Morrison (also a New Zealander and very well known in theatrical circles, both in Australia and in the Dominion) and Mr. Harvey Adams. “I feel very new beside them,” she volunteered. “They are both wonderful, and one can learn so much from them. In our opening play here, I have to wilt about and try to look beautiful”—whereupon she described six glorious creations that she has to “wilt” in—and as for trying to look beautiful that ought to be the easiest task of her life.

The company will play one night in Taihape, Miss Hamill’s home town. She is thrilled at the thought and is eagerly looking forward to getting there.

“And now,” she smiled, “you won’t mind if I return to my unpacking, will you? I have crowds of things to



straighten out.” And with a cheery good-bye she returned to her room.<sup>2</sup>

Opening night was *Fresh Fields* and the Wellington *Evening Post* critic was delighted,

“Fresh Fields,” one of the later comedies of Ivor Novello, was played at the Opera House on Saturday under the happiest of auspices. The play was not only a great artistic achievement, but also a box office success. An exceptionally gifted and competent company presented the play, and it was hard to find an empty seat in any part of the house.... More humour than wit characterises “Fresh Fields,” meaty humour—gamey, some of it.

The Play is one thing, the acting another.... Miss Hamill’s idea of the Lady Lilian was admirable. She appeared to thoroughly understand the unreality of the character depicting a foolishly proud, shallow-brained, self-centred, and semi-hypochondriacal woman with skill and enjoyment....

Miss Morrison; and Miss Hamill received a great welcome when they appeared, but it was nothing to the ovation given by the audience at the end of the play. Speeches were demanded and given. Miss Morrison described the reception of the company as “marvellous.” Miss Hamill said it was “wonderful,” adding that she could find no more to say than that she could not speak and that, anyway, she was hungry.

“Fresh Fields” will be repeated this and succeeding evenings. It is confidently recommended a cure for the blues....<sup>3</sup>

Saturday evening was an outstanding one in the history of the theatre in New Zealand, in that it witnessed two talented New Zealand actresses as leads in a J. C. Williamson comedy company. The occasion was the

first performance in New Zealand of Ivor Novello's comedy, "Fresh Fields," and the ladies in question were Ethel Morrison, that very gifted comedy actress who gained her first experience on the stage with the Wellington amateurs, and the other, Miss Elaine Hamill, formerly of Taihape, an extremely beautiful and graceful ingenue, whose rise in her profession has been meteoric, the past two years having covered her stage life in Australia. Both ladies received a great welcome, and as comedy developed into hilarity, it was sensed that both were ideally cast. The end of the play saw a scene of unusual enthusiasm, the stage being literally covered with flowers.<sup>4</sup>

Among the visitors to Wellington are Mr. and Mrs. Hamill, of Taihape, parents of Miss Elaine Hamill, of the J. C. Williamson Comedy Company.<sup>5</sup>

The members of Wellington's Pioneer Club gave the two New Zealand actors a welcome reception,

Miss Morrison (who was in a smart taitleur of navy blue with a white satin vest and tie, and a peachbloom hat of the same tone) was received with cordial applause.... Miss Hamill (wearing a dainty frock of pearl grey marocain with a folded black vest and collar, and a becoming flat hat with eye-veil) gave brief thanks to all.... A delectable afternoon tea, with sweets and savouries was served, and many present had the pleasure of a few words with the guests of honour.<sup>6</sup>

The guest of honour at a "five o'clock" party given at Sayes Court yesterday by Mr. Trevor Lane was Miss Elaine Hamill, the charming young New Zealand actress. Savouries and cocktails were served in the drawing-room, which was bright with bowls of chrysanthemums, red berries, and autumn leaves. Miss

Hamill wore a black frock with a cowl collar of forget-me-not blue satin and a smart halo hat with small blue flowers at one side.<sup>7</sup>

**GRAND GRAND OPERA HOUSE.**

A crowded house poured out of the Opera House on Saturday night with radiant faces and rapturous exclamations of: "What a beautiful play!" "The best of the three, don't you think?" "Oh, I must write to Kitty and Ted at Auckland!" "What a wonderful versatile company!" "All very gratifying—and so with great pleasure and a little pride we announce:

J. C. Williamson's Inimitable Company,

ETHEL MORRISON, ELAINE HAMILL  
ETHEL MORRISON, ELAINE HAMILL  
ETHEL MORRISON, ELAINE HAMILL  
ETHEL MORRISON, ELAINE HAMILL  
ETHEL MORRISON, ELAINE HAMILL  
ETHEL MORRISON, ELAINE HAMILL

And their

BRILLIANT ASSOCIATES

Will present this truly beautiful play by  
Keith Winter,

"THE SHINING HOUR."  
"THE SHINING HOUR."  
"THE SHINING HOUR."  
"THE SHINING HOUR."  
"THE SHINING HOUR."  
"THE SHINING HOUR."  
"THE SHINING HOUR."  
"THE SHINING HOUR."  
"THE SHINING HOUR."

Again

TONIGHT At 8 TONIGHT  
TONIGHT At 8 TONIGHT

And Each Evening until Friday Next,

SPECIAL MATINEE NEXT  
WEDNESDAY, At 2.15.

Box Plans for the season are at the D.I.C. and Day Sales for Back Stalls and Gallery may be bought from 9 a.m. at the Opera House Confectionery. For telephone booking ring 51-814.

Note the Prices: Seats may be reserved at 5s, 4s, 3s. Evening Prices: Reserved Dress Circle, 5s, 4s; Reserved Stalls, 3s; Ordinary Stalls (Reserves), 3s on day of performance. Gallery, 1s 6d. Early Door, 6d extra. Matinee, 4s, 3s, 2s; Gallery, 1s 6d. All prices plus tax.

*Evening Post* 25 May 1936.

The DIC held a special reception for them, they attended a one-act play evening, the YWCA Business Girls' Committee hosted them as guests of honour at a fundraiser and the Rivoli picture theatre ("Opp. Newtown School") played the film *Grandad Rudd*. The YA radio stations played Somerset Maugham's *The Circle*, specially adapted for broadcasting, with members of the company, including Elaine Hamill. At the Wellington Opera House the company next played *Night Must Fall*.

Miss Elaine Hamill was allotted the responsible part of the niece and secretary to Mrs. Bramson, and she was well cast for a character which combined strongly-

developed and acute woman's intuition, with woman's sense of the romantic. Miss Hamill handled this difficult part with the skill and forcefulness that would be expected from a player of ripe experience.<sup>8</sup>



*New Zealand Illustrated Sporting & Dramatic Review* 25 May 1936.



The Wellington Opera House programme for *Shining Hour*.



Inside page from the Wellington Opera House programme.

Wellington's Majestic picture theatre cashed in on Hamillmania by mounting the New Zealand premiere of *Thoroughbred* in June.<sup>9</sup> Theatres in other cities followed suit.

The company went on to Wanganui, Hawera, New Plymouth, Palmerston North (opening with *Fresh Fields*, which, the *Manawatu Standard* reassured its readers, was "without undue complications and (had) no brain puzzling subtleties")<sup>10</sup>, Hastings, Dannevirke and Taihape. The Auckland season would begin on 13 June.<sup>11</sup>



A scene from  
*Night Must Fall*,  
Elaine Hamill at  
right.

*Manawatu  
Standard* 4 June  
1936

The *King Country Chronicle* reported a reception at the Criterion Hotel, when the Mayor of New Plymouth said,

We are all glad to have the opportunity of meeting and knowing you... (our) particular interest in Miss Morrison and Miss Hamill was that they were New Zealanders who had brought distinction to the country of their birth. Many New Zealanders had gone forth into the

world to try conclusions with the world's best. Many had been extremely successful and had attained responsible positions. A few had attained fame and distinction in the particular art or profession in which they specialised. Amongst these latter they were pleased to place Miss Morrison and Miss Hamill. They had both in a very short time earned for themselves great reputations and great distinction in dramatic art, and had proved themselves great artists. They had gone very far in their professions but were still pressing on to further laurels and further conquests. Miss Hamill is a daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Hamill, formerly of Te Kuiti.<sup>12</sup>

The Palmerston North critic was over the moon,

Miss Hamill was the first of the featured players to appear, and in a most difficult role she scored a complete triumph. She instilled a rarely sense of dignity and charm, injured though the former quality was meant to be, that won studied admiration. This brilliant young artiste, who 17 months ago arrived in Sydney from New Zealand to "try her luck on the stage," is very charming indeed, and the role she played enabled her to give full rein to her dramatic powers. There was a superb dignity that would have led the audience to believe that only in a serious part would she be happy. But when the story reached its climax, and she "helped herself," her charming personality revelled in the happy atmosphere, emphasising the fine restraint she had exercised before hand.<sup>13</sup>





**J.C. WILLIAMSON ARTIST**

Elaine Hamill, brilliant young New Zealand actress, who will make her first Auckland appearance with the J.C. Williamson Comedy Company in "Fresh Fields" at His Majesty's Theatre next Saturday. *NZ Herald* 6 June 1936

Miss Elaine Hamill, who was a member of the nursing staff of the Dannevirke Hospital before taking up the stage as a profession, paid a visit to the Hospital Board when it was sitting yesterday. Miss Hamill was accorded a cordial reception and was later the guest of the matron and the staff, and the chairman of the board, at afternoon tea.<sup>14</sup>

The Taihape Town Hall was filled to capacity recently for a civic reception to Miss Elaine Hamill, of the J. C. Williamson Company at present touring the Dominion. On the platform was the Mayor, Mr L. B. H. de Lautour, and Mrs de Lautour, Mr and Mrs J. E. Hamill (parents of Miss Elaine Hamill), and Mr and Mrs A. O. P. Batley, representing the country districts. The Mayor, in

eulogising the ability and determination of Miss Hamill, claimed her as Taihape's daughter, and extended the guest a warm welcome and hearty congratulations on her meteoric rise. Mr Batley spoke on similar lines. The Mayor presented Miss Hamill with a handsome toilet set, the gift of the people of Taihape.<sup>15</sup>

In Auckland she gave the obligatory media interview to the *Star's* "Topics for Women,"

**ELAINE HAMILL.**  
**ARRIVAL IN AUCKLAND.**  
**CHARMING N.Z. ACTRESS.**

A knock on the door. It was early this frosty morning, and it seemed a pity to disturb a hard-working actress, who had arrived by the first train. "Who is it?" called a voice made softer by the door between. We explained through the keyhole who we were, and after the slight pause that interviewers are accustomed to from celebrities, the door was quickly opened. This was unusual, for generally celebrities, especially actress ones, like to take a minute or two to rustle into a tea-gown and wield a lipstick. And sometimes in the early morning they resent being disturbed. But Miss Hamill was brightness itself, had a smiling welcome and was as fresh as a daisy in spite of the train trip.

Young and attractive, with grey eyes, and a merry smile, Elaine Hamill, the New Zealand actress who since she went to Australia, has risen quickly in the theatre, is undeniably a beauty. She is tall, slim, and has a real, crowning glory of fair hair, which was this morning caught immaculately under a net for "setting" purposes—and she still remained a beauty.

"It's lovely to be back in New Zealand," she said, "especially as my mother is here to see me." For the past

two years Miss Hamill has been away from New Zealand, and during her first six months in Australia she devoted most of her time to study.

Miss Hamill was a nurse and did not attempt to “break in” on the theatrical world until she had completed her training as a nurse. She had always, ever since she could remember, she said, wanted to go on the stage, but there was opposition at home. It was considered too risky, unless she had something to fall back on, so the day she was eighteen she started training as a nurse. “I loved the work and found it very interesting, but once I had completed my course, I persuaded the family to let me go to Australia and endeavour to get a footing on the stage.”

First, Miss Hamill explained, came a period of training with the School of Dramatic Art, in Sydney. Then mannequin work with leading stores, followed by parts in broadcast plays. Drama was her aim, she said, and not musical comedy. She admitted that she could sing a little, but had never been trained, so intended to take up both singing and dancing as side-lines.

Speaking of the stage in Australia, Miss Hamill said that it was definitely coming back into its own once more. She felt very happy at being given the opportunity of appearing in a dramatic company. Her first stage appearance was in “Blue Mountain Melody,” with Madge Elliott and Cyril Ritchard, in which she was a show girl. Later she played in professional repertory, and then replaced Jean Duncan as Sophie in “Roberta” (the part played in New Zealand by Diana du Cane). It was after this that she was engaged to play in the company to which she now belongs. Her ambition is to do dramatic work, both on the stage and the films, and to go abroad.

Although she does not look in the slightest degree domesticated, Miss Hamill admitted that she had had her

full share of domestic activities. “Why, after three and a half years of hospital training! People will hardly believe that I got down and scrubbed floors. Well, I did—but never again.” Her spare time, however, Miss Hamill devotes to dress designing. “I can’t make clothes when on tour,” she said, “but I get ideas and scribble them down. Then I hand what is usually a dirty little scrap of paper to some poor dressmaker with instructions to make it for me.” Miss Hamill admitted the loved clothes. “Green is my favourite colour, although I wear a lot of black.” Her hobbies, she added, were swimming and tennis and horse riding—when she got time—for time was a fugitive thing in stage life.<sup>16</sup>

Miss Hamill’s first entrance was in an exquisite negligee of pastel pink georgette, the long angel sleeves and inset panel of knife pleats being finished with a flowing handkerchief of the same material. In the same act she changed into a silver grey chiffon and later wore a cloth coat of the same tone, finished with a wide fur collar. A small black hat completed the toilette. Another gown was a daffodil flowing frock patterned in a deeper shade and it had small frilled cape sleeves. Hyacinth blue georgette, an ice-white chiffon and a petunia ninon were the other graceful flowing gowns, each frock having its handkerchief fastened to the wrist and made of the different materials, while the bodices were noticeable for their swaying draperies and cape effects.<sup>17</sup>

The company staged Rachael Crothers’s *As Husbands Go* for the first time during its Auckland season and ended the stage season with *Night Must Fall*. The members of the company presented Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Ernest* on radio station 1YA. Elaine attended a function with the YWCA Business Girls and was guest of honour at a meeting of the Auckland Travel Club in the Milne & Choyce tearooms, at

which botanist Lucy Cranwell gave a talk on New Zealand wildflowers.<sup>18</sup> Ethel Morrison and Elaine Hamill attended a meeting of the Auckland Penwoman's Club.

The company took *Fresh Fields* and *The Shining Hour* to Hamilton ("Representatives of the Cambridge Literary and Dramatic Society were present at the afternoon given by the Dean of Hamilton, and Mrs Weatherhog, in honour of Miss Ethel Morrison and Miss Elaine Hamill")<sup>19</sup>

A very pleasant reception was held at the Waikato Lyceum Club, Hamilton, on Tuesday morning, at which the guests of honour were Miss Ethel Morrison and Miss Elaine Hamill, of the J. C. Williamson Company. There was a large attendance of members and friends. The guests were received by the president of the club, Mrs. H. Douglas, who wore an ensemble in rowanberry flecked tweed and toning hat.<sup>20</sup>

Thence *Fresh Fields* for one night to Masterton's Regent Theatre on 9 July,<sup>21</sup>



MISS ELAINE HAMILL  
Who plays the role of Lucille  
Lingard  
in "As Husbands Go."

*Otago Daily Times* 1 August 1936.

**R**EGENT THEATRE, MASTERTON**"FRESH FIELDS."**AN EPOCH IN THEATRE  
HISTORY.TO-NIGHT (THURSDAY) TO-NIGHT.  
TO-NIGHT (THURSDAY) TO-NIGHT.  
TO-NIGHT (THURSDAY) TO-NIGHT.  
At 8 o'clock.

THIS ONE OCCASION ONLY.

J. C. WILLIAMSON, LTD.,

Present the two brilliant New Zealand  
artists—**Ethel Morrison**      **Elaine Hamill**

Together with an incomparable company of specially selected artists in Ivor Novello's brilliantly clever and phenomenally successful London comedy-drama,

	"FRESH FIELDS."	
	"FRESH FIELDS."	
	"FRESH FIELDS."	
	"FRESH FIELDS."	

A frank, joyous and audacious comedy, which ran for over two years in London, and in which the company created a furore of enthusiasm in Wellington, where it attracted record audiences.

## THE CAST INCLUDES:

Lady Mary .....	Ethel Morrison
Lady Lillian .....	Elaine Hamill
Tom Larcombe .....	Harvey Adams
Mrs Pidgeon .....	Katie Towers
Tim Crabbe .....	Arthur Lane
Una Pidgeon .....	Phyllis Baker
Ludlow .....	Norman Shepherd
Lady Strawholme .....	Connie Martyn

Play produced by Harvey Adams.

BOX PLANS ARE NOW OPEN AT  
PERRY'S.POPULAR PRICES: D.C. & R.S., 5/6;  
Unreserved Stalls, 3/6; Pit, 2/- (all  
prices plus tax).

“Fresh Fields,” one of Ivor Novello’s later comedies, was happily received at the Regent Theatre last night. Definitely modern and definitely lively comedy, the play was acclaimed with tremendous enthusiasm by the large audience.... Miss Hamill was really splendid as the languorous Lady Lilian, the so easily shocked and virtuously indignant, superior person. She carried the arduous work of this difficult part through with distinction.... The presentation of bouquets to Miss Hamill, Miss Morrison and Miss Baker, concluded a thoroughly appreciated presentation of a delightful comedy.<sup>22</sup>

On from Masterton to Christchurch’s Theatre Royal on 11 July for a two weeks’ season during which the players also performed AA Milne’s comedy *Mr Pim Passes By* on 4YA.

Thence to Dunedin on the 25<sup>th</sup> when the *Otago Daily Times* reporter interviewed Elaine,

Miss Hamill... wore a tailored dress of black cloque with a diamante brooch and a squirrel fur coat, and had taken off the curls which she had worn as Lady Lilian, and had only her own pale gold longish bobbed hair. The affected and tiresome creature of the stage was replaced by a natural, healthy, slightly shy and sincerely charming girl. Billboards describe Elaine Hamill as “beautiful.” For once, they do not lie. With her height, her grey eyes and her delicate colouring she is like Tennyson’s description of Helen— “divinely tall and most divinely fair.”

“So you don’t always wear Lady Lilian draperies?” I exclaimed.

“Oh, no! Never except in ‘Fresh Fields.’ All my other stage clothes are modern and close-fitting. And my every-day clothes are tailored for daytime and slinky or bouffant frocks for evening. Apart from being Lady

Lilian, I never affect floating things.” Which was an interesting revelation of how well she had played the part, for, on Saturday evening, she had seemed to be so wholly a Lady Lilian in character that it was impossible to imagine her as anything else.

“And what parts do you hope to play in the future?” I continued.

She laughed. “Nothing that would suit me, I fear. Everybody wants to play parts they would be unfitted for, and I am no exception. But as long as I get some role to fill, I shall not mind much. It is all so interesting.”

Miss Hamill is a qualified nurse as well as being an actress, and had that to fall back on when she went to try her luck in Australia, if she had not found her way so successfully to the stage. Her great aim now is to go to London and try her wings there, with, she hopes, an equal amount of good fortune. She realises that she is in an excellent company and is learning all she can while associated with it. Both she and Miss Morrison, unknown to either, spoke with the greatest admiration and affection of the other. This tour, for all the company, is evidently a very happy experience.

Miss Hamill’s hobbies are dress designing, swimming, tramping, and (when the roads are flat enough) cycling. She cycled in Christchurch, and enjoyed it immensely. She is starting her career with the right outlook and has every likelihood of reaching the top of the tree.

On the stage, both she and Miss Morrison are people of great personality. In real life they are even more so.<sup>23</sup>

Of her role in *The Shining Hour* the ODT said,

Miss Hamill found herself working rather harder than she is required to in two at least of the other features of the season, but it definitely agreed with her. She has



verve and fire, pose and repose, and, most blessed of all assets to the dramatic player, a complete realisation of the importance of gesture and attitude.<sup>24</sup>

And of her role in *As Husbands Go*,

... here we have a polished and suave performance that has a great deal to commend it. Even if one likes Miss Hamill better in a heavily dramatic role, it must be admitted that she has conviction and appeal as a sort of demi-semi sort of emotionalist.<sup>25</sup>

Their last performance in New Zealand was at His Majesty's Theatre in Dunedin on 4 August 1936.

The tour had been a brilliant success. The company left for Sydney on the *Marama* from Wellington on 7 August.



Wellington photographer Spencer Digby exhibited a portrait of her in the 1936 Bledisloe Cup photographic competition shown in Auckland in March 1937.<sup>26</sup>



A FINE PORTRAIT STUDY.

Miss Elaine Hamill, the New Zealand actress, by Spencer Digby, Wellington  
*New Zealand Herald* 20 March 1937.

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- 1 *Evening Post* 27 February 1936.
  - 2 *Auckland Star* 8 May 1936.
  - 3 *Evening Post* 11 May 1936.
  - 4 *Dominion* quoted in *NZ Herald* 30 May 1936.
  - 5 *Evening Post* 11 May 1936.
  - 6 *Evening Post* 12 May 1936.
  - 7 *Evening Post* 13 May 1936.
  - 8 *Evening Post* 18 May 1936.
  - 9 *Evening Post* 4 June 1936.
  - 10 *Manawatu Standard* 29 May 1936.
  - 11 *Evening Star* 30 May 1936.
  - 12 *King Country Chronicle* 6 June 1936.
  - 13 *Manawatu Standard* 6 June 1936.
  - 14 *Manawatu Standard* 11 June 1936.
  - 15 *Manawatu Standard* 16 June 1936.
  - 16 *Auckland Star* 13 June 1936.
  - 17 *Auckland Star* 15 June 1936.
  - 18 *New Zealand Herald* 27 June 1936.
  - 19 *Waikato Independent* 9 July 1936.
  - 20 *NZ Herald* 9 July 1936.
  - 21 *Wairarapa Daily Times* 27 June 1936.
  - 22 *Wairarapa Daily Times* 10 July 1936.
  - 23 *Otago Daily Times* 28 July 1936.
  - 24 *Otago Daily Times* 31 July 1936.
  - 25 *Otago Daily Times* 1 August 1936.
  - 26 *New Zealand Herald* 20 March 1937.

## Chapter 5: back in Sydney

The *Sydney Morning Herald* welcomed the company back,

### **MISS ELAINE HAMILL**

**N.Z. Actress Honoured**

#### **CIVIC RECEPTION IN HOME TOWN.**

**Miss Elaine Hamill, together with other members of the J.C. Williamson Company, returned by the Marama from a successful four months' tour of New Zealand with the plays "Fresh Fields," "Night Must Fall," and "The Shining Hour."**

I was terribly scared before the first night at Wellington, because I knew that my mother and father were in the audience and that they had never even seen me on the stage before," confessed Miss Hamill. "Then there were dozens of school friends and many nurses from the hospital, who had come to see me mainly because before going on the stage I was a nurse," she continued. "They all came up to my dressing-room after the play 'Fresh Fields,' and we had great fun, talking about old school-days and nursing experiences."

From Wellington, where they were received with enthusiasm, both on the stage and as the guests of numerous clubs and repertory societies, the company went to New Plymouth.

#### **RECEPTION AT HOSPITAL.**

"At Dannevirke, where I had completed my nursing training for two and a half years, I was given a civic reception, and also one by the hospital board, where in the afternoon at tea I was presented to the wives and families of all the honoraries and their wives," said Miss Hamill with a bright laugh. "They presented me with

beautiful bouquets and made eulogistic speeches as if I were a Bernhardt, Duse, or a Gladys Cooper returning to her native heath.”

Next day the company arrived at Taihape, Miss Hamill’s home town, where the entire population turned out in full force. At a civic reception a presentation was made of a complete dressing-table set. “The Mayor gave an afternoon tea reception on the day before we left, and I had to go to the public school and make a speech to the children.”

Miss Ethel Morrison, too, being a New Zealander, was given numerous receptions by clubs and different organisations.<sup>1</sup>

Newspapers in all the main centres carried the story and Elaine was in demand: she dressed as a nurse for a fundraiser, she attended a charity ball and she was cast in a new play,

“**THE** Love Story of Ann,” Frank Harvey play, to be staged at the Theatre Royal on September 29, has been tried out in London, but has never been seen here before. Its story and characters are Australian. For the Sydney matinee, the cast will be Elaine Hamill, Harvey Adams, John Weston, Philip Lewis, and John Fernside.<sup>2</sup>

The *Sydney Morning Herald* considered the play a “lurid melodrama,” although...

The woman was played by Miss Elaine Hamill, who gave a tense, sincere, and attractive interpretation of a character in whose objective existence the actress could not have believed very strongly.<sup>3</sup>

### TROCADERO.

TO-NIGHT: OLD-TIME—NEW VOGUE DANCING, 8 until 11.30. Ladies 1/6, Gentlemen 2/.  
 REX SNAW and the TROCADERO OLD TIME ORCHESTRA, with Margaret Grimshaw, introducing “The Trocadere,” demonstrated by Peggy and Tommy Roberts.

### TO-MORROW NIGHT—POPULAR DANCING, 8 UNTIL 11.30.

Ladies 1/6, Gentlemen 2/. GRAND FINAL 1936 DANCING CHAMPIONSHIP. Demonstration by Mr. Leslie Cranbourne and Miss Peggy Shields. FRANK COUGHLAN and the NEW TROCADERO ORCHESTRA.

“FRIDAY FASHION TEA” NEXT FRIDAY. Elaine Hamill and a Fashion Parade of Beautiful Girls and Gowns. Tea and Dancing, 2/. Reservations, MA631.



▲ *Telegraph* (Brisbane)  
3 October 1936.

Sun (Sydney)  
22 November 1936 ►

TROCADERO

Cool as an evening breeze,  
Elaine Hamill is a vision in  
white, as she will appear in the  
"Fashion Tea" at the Trocadero  
next Friday afternoon.

"ELAINE HAMILL has been drawing wonderful houses in Sydney for the fashion teas at the Trocadero. Later she expects to go to England," confided Brisbane's *Truth*.<sup>4</sup>

Her opinion was sought...

## ACTRESS ON JUDGE'S DRESS VIEW

**J**UDGE BEEBY said in the Full Arbitration Court that women love changing their frocks.

Mr. A. E. Huckerby, for the Actors' Equity of Australia, said actresses regarded it as hard work.

"They're both right," declared Miss Elaine Hamill, who has played leading parts in a number of legitimate plays in Australia and New Zealand.

"I agree with the Judge that women like changing their frocks—but on the stage it has long since lost its charm," she said yesterday.

### *LIGHTNING CHANGE*

"In *The Shining Hour*, which was played in Sydney about a year ago, I had exactly one and a half minutes to change from full riding kit into evening dress.

"It was impossible for me to get to my dressing-room for the change, so a screen was arranged for me at the side of the stage.

"Even learned judges, being men, are apt not to realise that we have to change stockings and shoes, fiddle with hooks and domes, and then do our hair all over again when we make a quick change.

"The changes in *Roberta* reduced Madge Elliott nearly to a nervous wreck.

"Yes, we females love changing our clothes, but we like to have plenty of time in which to change them . . . as most men should know, if they've kicked their heels for a while before a dinner appointment."

She attended charity teas, mannequin parades, a dance to celebrate the Sydney Yacht Club's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary. In April 1937 her mother visited,

AN early arrival at the wharf for the Awatea to-day was Elaine Hamill, who came to meet her mother, Mrs. J. E. Hamill of Taihaepe, New Zealand. Although Elaine has lived in Sydney for more than three years her mother is paying her first visit to Sydney. Mrs. Hamill, who is president of the Girl Guide Association in her home town, plans to spend about six weeks here as the guest of her daughter at "The Cecil," Macleay-street.<sup>5</sup>

In May they attended the opening night of *Lovers' Leap* at the Theatre Royal and a fashion parade,

Miss Elaine Hamill was in a frock of dove grey chiffon with a shoulder cape of summer ermine, and she was accompanied by her mother, who fastened red roses to the lapel of the fur coat covering her black lace frock.<sup>6</sup>

It was awfully nice to see Shirley Ann Richards and Elaine Hamill at the fashion parade at the Pickwick Club last Thursday with their rightly proud mammas.<sup>7</sup>

Also in May,

Cinesound Productions, Ltd., announces that Shirley Ann Richards and Elaine Hamill will play the two leading feminine roles in "Lovers and Luggers." They will support Lloyd Hughes, the American movie star, who will play the leading role.<sup>8</sup>

She (Elaine Hamill) will play the role of a beautiful English girl in "Lovers and Luggers," and now, so I am told, is being glamorised at Cinesound studio for the part.<sup>9</sup>





*ELAINE HAMILL,*  
who has a big part in the Cinesound  
film "Lovers and Luggers" caught  
in merry mood.

—Raymond Sawyer, Sydney, photo.

Telegraph (Brisbane)  
19 June 1937.



Elaine Hamill wearing the lovely gold lame evening gown (right), the black velvet 'Cellophane'-striped wrap designed for her sophisticated part in *Lovers and Luggers* (centre) and at left she wears an exquisite maize negligee trimmed with forest-green velvet.



*Labor Daily* (Sydney)  
16 July 1937.



Elaine Hamill

Miss Hamill is one of the most photographed girls in Australia. She is in demand as a model because of her classical beauty of face and figure, and withal she is said to be a charming girl highly interested in her work. In "Lovers and Luggers" she plays the role of a London society girl.<sup>10</sup>



OFF THE SET, from left, Miss Elaine Hamill, Mrs. Lloyd Hughes, Mrs. Hal Chapman, and the leading players, Lloyd Hughes and Shirley Ann Richards, kept warm around an improvised coke burner, after they had completed one of their tropical island shots.

The film was completed in a few weeks,

**THE** completion of the film, "Lovers and Luggers," was celebrated at a dance held at the Cinesound studio on Saturday night by the members of the cast and the studio staff, who entertained 450 guests. Mr. and Mrs. Ken. Hall, Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Hughes, Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Gillespie, Mr. and Mrs. John Glass, Mr. and Mrs. John Evans, and the Misses Shirley Ann Richards and Elaine Hamill, were among the dancers.<sup>11</sup>



**ELAINE HAMILL** as the glamorous English girl Stella Raff, in Cinesound's "Lovers and Luggers." She is the girl who sends her lover (Lloyd Hughes) to Thursday Island to find her a pearl.

The film was released in the United States as *Vengeance of the Deep*.

*Truth* (Sydney)  
8 August 1937



LLOYD HUGHES, from Hollywood, and Elaine Hamill, the stars of the Cine-sound film, *Lovers and Luggers*, made at the Sydney studios of the company.

News (Adelaide) 2 September 1937.

Sydney was learning from Hollywood: the stars of *Lovers and Luggers* attended the glitzy premiere of *Wings of the Morning* at the Embassy Theatre “amid a Continental first night atmosphere.”

Passing shoppers crowded the entrance to watch the arrival of local screen stars and well-known people, who were called upon to say a few words into the microphone.

Floodlights played upon guests as they arrived, and cameras recorded their arrival for the screen.

Lloyd Hughes, who plays the lead in “Lovers and Luggers,” confessed he was afraid of microphones, but, nevertheless, spoke longer than anyone else.

Campbell Copelin, who also plays a part in the film, was heard over the air saying, “Never mind about that,” as he was being introduced as “that tall and handsome young man.”

Miss Elaine Hamill, who looked charming in a black organza and net frock with white roses at the corsage, broadcast a few words....<sup>12</sup>



# ELAINE HAMILL

THOSE who have read Gurney Slade's novel, "Lovers and Luggers," and who are also familiar with Elaine Hamill's appearance on stage and screen, will appreciate the choice of selecting her to play the role of Stella Raff in Cinesound's film version of the novel. Stella Raff is a London society girl who sends a famous pianist, Daubeny Carshott (played by the American actor, Lloyd Hughes) to Thursday Island to get her a pearl. When Daubeny first saw Stella in a London drawing-room, this is how she appeared according to the novel.

"Perhaps Stella's dress, which was a symphony in silver, was faintly reminiscent of a night life film, but her face was certainly not a Hollywood type, for



Cellulose-stripped black chiffon velvet is used for this lovely evening coat with a flared backward collar in the skirt. Worn by Elaine Hamill in "Lovers and Luggers."

It was evident from her mouth that she cherished at least one illusion. She had blue Nordic eyes and her hair was the colour of ripe Palestine corn, the same which refreshes the eye of the traveller from Sinal and causes the Russian Tartars to rub their hands with joy and

## Her Next Australian Film is "Lovers and Luggers."

congratulate themselves on having taken up Zionism.

As for her figure, which was slightly under middle height, I need say no more than that it was the direct cause of Adele Parfitt, the Regent-street maidservant, throwing up her job and marrying a simple Member of Parliament. "Because," said Adele, "I have at last met with a better figure than mine." Now Adele was as graceful as a fawn, and although she could not speak Turkish, she had had many tempting offers of employment in Constantinople."

### Attractive Part.

It will be seen that Miss Hamill is required to play the part of an attractive and unusual girl. But Stella Raff is not only physically attractive, but also shrewdly intelligent, and sophisticated in so far as that much abused word means modern-minded.

Elaine Hamill should look and play the part admirably. She is a New Zealand girl, who first attracted attention in Australia when she won a newspaper film competition, following which she was featured in Cinesound's "Granddad Rudd." She then joined the J. C. Williamson organisation, and toured with the "Roberta" company, replacing Jean Duncan in the part of "Sophie Train." While in Perth, Miss Hamill received a telegram from her head office asking her to play the lead in "The Shining Hour" opening at Melbourne. She received great praise for her work in the play. Then followed the lead in "Sixteen" and a return to Sydney to play in Cinesound's "Thoroughbred." Back to the stage, her next appearance was in "Night Must Fall," which opened in Melbourne. Then came a season in Brisbane, Miss Hamill playing in "Fresh Fields," "The Shining Hour," "Night Must Fall." Later came a New Zealand tour, with the same three plays and "As Husbands Go" in the repertoire.

Miss Hamill is one of the most photographed girls in Australia. She is tremendously in demand because of her classical beauty of face and figure and because of her elegance. Withal, she is a charming girl, highly interested in her work, yet modest about her successes and unspoiled by the publicity that these have earned for her. Before Cinesound asked her to play in "Lovers and Luggers," she had booked her passage for America. She cancelled the passage, however, and will leave after the film is finished.







*"Australian Girls, Island Pearls: Elaine Hamill"*  
*Australian Women's Weekly* 15 January 1938.

The hero of the film, Daubenny Carshott (Lloyd Hughes) desires London society girl Stella Raff (Elaine Hamill). Stella agrees to marry him if he brings her a big pearl from Thursday Island. Daubenny buys a lugger on the island and makes friends with Captain Quidley and his daughter, Lorna (Shirley Anne Richards). Lorna and Daubenny become friends and she secretly falls in love with him. Daubenny finds a pearl, Stella arrives, Daubenny rejects her, Lorna reveals she is in love with him and they kiss and sail into the sunset.

In August the JC Williamson Comedy Company revived *Maid of the Mountains* with Gladys Moncrieff in the lead role and Elaine Hamill playing Angela in Brisbane.<sup>13</sup> They played to full houses and were feted in the city.

Miss Elaine Hamill... confirmed previous impressions of her intelligence as an actress, with the asset in addition of charm.<sup>14</sup>

It would be her last appearance on the Australian stage,

### **Elaine Hamill for London**

**THE** good wishes of The Australian Women's Weekly go with Elaine Hamill, winner of the paper's Film Quest competition, on her trip to England. After successes both on the stage and in films, Elaine is anxious to gain experience abroad and is leaving for London in the *Viminale* on September 13. Her time in Sydney is very short, as she has been asked by "The Firm" to leave this Wednesday for Brisbane to take a leading role in "Maid of the Mountains," and will return just in time to catch her ship.<sup>15</sup>

She is looking forward to a pleasant voyage as her route will take her to Greece and Italy. She will leave the ship at Genoa and will continue overland. Otherwise her plans are indefinite.<sup>16</sup>

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- 1 *Sydney Morning Herald* 13 August 1936.
  - 2 *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 15 September 1936.
  - 3 *Sydney Morning Herald* 30 September 1936.
  - 4 *Truth* (Brisbane) 29 November 1936.
  - 5 *Sun* (Sydney) 30 April 1937.
  - 6 *Sydney Morning Herald* 17 May 1937.
  - 7 *Truth* (Sydney) 30 May 1937.
  - 8 *Sun* (Sydney) 7 May 1937.
  - 9 *Labor Daily* (Sydney) 8 May 1937.
  - 10 *Mercury* (Hobart) 24 July 1937.
  - 11 *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 2 August 1937.
  - 12 *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 14 August 1937.
  - 13 *Telegraph* (Brisbane) 21 August 1937.
  - 14 *Courier-Mail* (Brisbane) 23 August 1937.
  - 15 *Australian Women's Weekly* 21 August 1937.
  - 16 *Argus* (Melbourne) 16 September 1937.

**Chapter 6: in London**



*Herald* (Melbourne) 4 December 1937.

The Melbourne *Herald's* "Woman Writer in London"  
interviewed Elaine at length in November 1937,

## ***YOUTHFUL ACTRESS WINS FAME***

### **Elaine Hamill's Success**

**Elaine Hamill, the attractive young New Zealand actress who gained her entire stage training in Australia during the last three years, feels like a princess in a fairy tale—sometimes wonders if she will wake up and find her good fortune all a dream...**

**WITHIN** two weeks of arriving in London, she has made two important broadcasts from the B.B.C. (one in television), and as a result of her pretty face appearing in the picture pages of Sunday newspapers, has received offers from three leading British film companies.

As well, there is a definite offer to sign a contract with the Birmingham Repertory Company, which she is unlikely to accept, for there is no doubt that fame and fortune on a much larger scale are just around the corner for Elaine.

From the beginning, things went well with her, and luck turned her way.

Although she knew few people in London, it seemed that everyone she met was eager to help her, and secure introductions to important people.

To anyone who realises the hopeless struggle some ambitious young girls from overseas have had, encountering the stony indifference that can be London's, the story is infinitely more romantic than any fiction.

### ***Televised***

**HOW** did it all happen? "I just determined to leave Australia and come to London to look for more stage experience, with a light heart and a certain amount of

money in the bank,” she told me, her grey eyes dancing with happiness.

“Since I arrived, I have devoted the whole of my time to just meeting people. I’ve not even had time to go to the theatre. I’ve an Australian friend, Loraine Streeter, from Brisbane, who is attached to the staff of a big Fleet Street daily newspaper, and it was through her that my picture appeared.

“Immediately afterward I was approached by the B.B.C., and found myself being televised, telling the story of some of the amusing incidents I have encountered touring with theatrical companies in Australia—all about the experiences I had when buried alive in an earthquake in New Zealand in 1931.

“Nervous? Yes, horribly, although I’d broadcast before, at home.

“Fortunately, there is now no need to be plastered with macabre blue make-up which was necessary when television first began. An ordinary film make-up is worn.

### ***B.B.C. Feature***

**THEN** I appeared in the ‘In Town Tonight’ feature, which is the popular Saturday night show put on regularly by the B.B.C. It was a great thrill to appear with Laura la Plante and Irving Asher, the big man from Warner’s, Hollywood.

“In fact, I have been meeting celebrities ever since I came to London—including the impresario Firth Shepherd, who has so many successful shows running at the moment that he is resting on his laurels.”

Lady Annaly, a close personal friend of the Queen’s, met Elaine and took an instant fancy to her—and today, much to her delight, she was going along to an intimate little luncheon party at Lady Annaly’s house.

This prominent hostess is chairwoman of one of London’s big charity balls which will be held during the

Little Season, and has picked on the newcomer to help Merle Oberon distribute the prizes.

The Film Ball is another dazzling function to which this lucky girl will be taken.

She herself is vastly amused by the fact that in London, she is publicised as being 23 years old, although she is actually 25, and in Australia made no secret of it.

“I found that in London stageland, everyone lops off at least two or three years of their age,” she said. “If I told the public here that I was 25, the rumor would spread instantly that my correct age must be at least 29 or 30!”

### *Ambitious Plans*

**HOLLYWOOD** is Miss Hamill’s ultimate aim, but very sensibly she intends gaining experience in London before venturing there, especially now that the gates of opportunity are opened to her so magically.

She has ambitious plans for playing straight parts both on the stage and in films, but has no particular famous actress on which she plans to model herself.

She says quite frankly that she would rather develop as an individualist type.

“Naturally I have a complete admiration for the work of such stars as Gertrude Lawrence, Dame Marie Tempest, and the rest of the world-famous figures the English stage has produced. But I feel that I shall do better if I am just my natural self.”

Her low, well-modulated speaking voice is among the assets which have attracted the interest of the film company scouts seeking talent.

Her last work in Australia was in a sound picture, “Luggers and Lovers,” in which she played opposite Lloyd Hughes, the American.

Australian audiences will remember her clever work in such stage productions as “The Shining Hour,”

“Sixteen,” “Night Must Fall,” “As Husbands Go,” and “Fresh Fields.”

Until she went on the stage under the auspices of The Firm, she had lived quietly with her parents in New Zealand, where her father, Mr J. E. Hamill, owned a newspaper, at Taihape.

### *Mayfair Dressing*

**DURING** her brief stay, she has had plenty of opportunity to meet the smart women of Mayfair, and observe their mode of dressing.

In her opinion, Australian women have nothing to learn from them in the way of fashion.

“But I do admire the way they apply their cosmetics here,” she said.

“Their skins are perfectly lovely to begin with—and they are invariably so exquisitely groomed. But on the other hand, I don’t suppose many of our women have either the money or the leisure to be in the hands of the beauty specialist regularly every day, as so many of these Mayfairites are.”<sup>1</sup>

Back home in New Zealand the *Auckland Star* carried the same story on 14 December. The *NZ Herald* reported she was “undergoing film tests with a view to taking part in British pictures”.<sup>2</sup> In London, the *Daily Mirror*’s “Personality Parade” published a photograph, with “Don’t you think she is lovely?”<sup>3</sup> It was all looking very promising.

The *King Country Chronicle* proudly reported,

Elaine Hamill, a former Te Kuiti girl, tells me that she has not struck a satisfactory job yet, though there have been two or three offers, but her picture is continually getting into the newspapers (says an overseas exchange). The legend has spread in London that Elaine once won a beauty prize in New Zealand. This worries Elaine more



than a little because it's not true, but she finds it exceedingly difficult to scotch the rumour. Last Sunday "The Observer," Mr. Garvin's august newspaper, had it, but Elaine was not a little flattered to find that she had a paragraph to herself among the personalities of the week. She was the only woman mentioned among such personalities as M. Andre Maurois and Professor Gilbert Murray, an Australian. Said "The Observer":—"The London stage has received a charming accession in the person of Miss Elaine Hamill, the Australian actress. In 1936 she was chosen by popular vote 'Miss New Zealand.' Immediately on her arrival in this country she was televised in that capacity. But, unlike other beauty queens, Miss Hamill has not become an actress because she was a beauty, but treats her appearance as a happy accident which may be of assistance in her art. Miss Hamill is no novice in the theatre. A native of North Island, in New Zealand, she has played the lead in many important productions not only in her own Dominion, but also in Australia. Among other roles in which she has achieved success, her performances in 'The Shining Hour' and 'Night Must Fall,' may be mentioned. We may hope that English audiences will soon have an opportunity of seeing her in a London theatre."<sup>4</sup>

She acted in the BBC radio drama *St Louis Blues* broadcast in February<sup>5</sup> and in March began contributing to a weekly column from the Sydney paper *Smith's Weekly's* London Office. The first in the series was "Elaine Hamill explores London" (*Smith's Weekly* 19 March 1938) and subsequent articles were headlined, "Lovely Elaine Hamill makes her Bow" (26 March); "My First Gallop in Richmond Park" (2 April); "I Meet Leslie Howard and Vanbrugh Sisters at Savoy Dinner" (9 April); "Ermine and Silver Fox Combine" (16 April); "Australians Well-Met In Berkeley Square" (23 April); "Hats, Scarves and Monkey Fur" (30 April); "Watching Strip Tease in Paris" (7

May); “Mrs. Chamberlain’s Modern Taste In Furnishings” (14 May). The articles were liberally illustrated with, among others, fashion and social photographs of herself.





In Richmond Park: Elaine and Australian actor Elizabeth Edwards.  
"Elaine is wearing a Nicholls of Regent Street riding suit."





At the annual dinner of the Critics' Circle, held at the Savoy Hotel.  
Leslie Howard, Irene Vanbrugh, and Elaine Hamill.



The crew of the new flying-boat *Coolangatta* with Elaine.



14 May was her last column, for a week later *Smith's Weekly* announced "Elaine Hamill For West End Stage." She had played Phyllis in John van Druten's *After All* at the "Q" Theatre<sup>6</sup> but this was much more important: *Money Talks* with Sir Seymour Hicks, at the Lyceum in April.<sup>7</sup> She wrote home to New Zealand,

**“DREAM COME TRUE”**  
**ELAINE HAMILL IN LONDON.**  
**TE KUITI GIRL THRILLED.**

She was having a particularly busy time, for while rehearsing for “Money Talks” she was appearing at the “Q” Theatre in “After All.”

Miss Hamill says: “I can’t believe all this has happened to me, and so suddenly, too. What a chance it is for me—walking straight into the West End, and playing opposite Seymour Hicks—it hardly seems possible. I have to keep pinching myself to make sure that I am not dreaming!

“Sir Seymour is a brilliant actor and a splendid producer, who knows the theatre backwards. What a man to work for! People say that one learns more about stagecraft in a week with him than one would learn in a year with anyone else. Though severe when producing, Sir Seymour is the sweetest, kindest person, full of fun, when he is not working.”

**Indignation at “Interview.”**

Miss Hamill expresses indignation regarding an alleged interview that appeared in a London paper in which it was stated that she said Englishmen were too effeminate. She made no such statement.

Of her appearance in “After All” at the “Q” Theatre, Miss Hamill writes: “We opened to a packed house. I was terrified—my first London appearance!—but was heartened by dozens of good-luck telegrams. The play went splendidly. I had a lovely part, and everyone told me that I gave a beautiful performance—I hope I did! After one big scene of mine with my ‘stage father’ I received a marvellous ‘hand.’”<sup>8</sup>



A new portrait of Miss Elaine Hamill, the New Zealand actress, who went to England last November and who is now taking a prominent role in the Seymour Hicks London production of "Money Talks."

*Press* 30 July 1938

She was in *Behold We Live* at the "Q" in July;<sup>9</sup> the film *Luggers & Lovers* was showing in Dundee in August;<sup>10</sup> she was in Ivor Novello's play *The Rat* at the "Q" in September and the critic "M.H.W." wrote,

Elaine Hamill, as the society girl who falls in love with the Rat, makes the most of a part that calls for some very tricky acting. She resisted what must be a great temptation to overact, and is one of the best members of what is, on the whole, a good cast.<sup>11</sup>

In May 1939 a play written by Edward Percy and Reginald Denham, *The Distant Hand*, opened at the "Q", with Elaine Hamill in a leading role. The *Stage* reviewed it at some length, concluding, "Elaine Hamill succeeds well."<sup>12</sup>

The 1939 Associated British film *The Outsider* was based on,

... Dorothy Brandon's story of the unqualified practitioner who surpassed the best surgeons in the world in the curing of cripples. The culminating point in his



career was reached when he undertook to cure the crippled daughter of one of the greatest surgeons in England, while Harley Street stands about waiting for him to fail.... In the supporting cast, all of who are good, is another girl well known to Australian audiences—Elaine Hamill—who takes her comparatively small part in her stride neither over nor under acting it....<sup>13</sup>

She played the charlatan, Ragatzi's nurse.

In March 1940 she played in the BBC Home Service series *Curiouser and curiouser*<sup>14</sup> and in April she was in Dundee.

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1 *Herald* (Melbourne) 4 December 1937.

2 *NZ Herald* 30 November 1937.

3 *Daily Mirror* 13 January 1938.

4 *King Country Chronicle* 26 January 1938.

5 *Scotsman* 10 February 1938.

6 *NZ Herald* 12 May 1938

7 *Sheffield Independent* 29 April 1938.

8 *King Country Chronicle* 23 May 1938.

9 *West Middlesex Gazette* 16 July 1938.

10 *Dundee Courier* 30 August 1938.

11 *Acton Gazette* 9 September 1938.

12 *Stage* 11 May 1939.

<sup>13</sup> *Telegraph* (Brisbane) 14 February 1939.

14 *Western Daily Press* 4 March 1940.

## Chapter 7: in Dundee

Elaine Hamill was working professionally with the Dundee Repertory Theatre, her first play Max Catto's *Punch Without Judy* in April 1940. The *Dundee Evening Telegraph* said she acted "intelligently in an arduous part".<sup>1</sup> The *Dundee Courier* liked the play and her role in it,

There is much to praise in the Dundee Repertory Theatre production... an entertaining play delightfully acted.... Dundee audiences will want to see lots more of newcomer Elaine Hamill, an actress of unusual ability. Her Judy was attractive and convincing.<sup>2</sup>

The New Zealand media were watching,

### **TE KUITI ACTRESS SUCCESS IN SCOTLAND ELAINE HAMILL PRAISED**

"As Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, Elaine Hamill does magnificently in the most important part she has had since joining the company. Her dignity and looks are in keeping with the role." says a Scottish paper in referring to the success of the Dundee Repertory Society in "Viceroy Sarah."

The play is of the early 18th century, revealing the many crosscurrents of intrigue which dominated Court life in those days. It is a battle of wits between two women of a like temperament for the favour of the Queen.

Miss Hamill was engaged by the company for a month from London, and at the end of that period was offered and accepted an engagement for a further six months. The society stages new plays in rapid succession, and Elaine says that she loves the hard work

even if her brain does reel at times under the heavy pressure! She also says that the experience has been invaluable to her.

Miss Hamill has been cheered by meetings with her brother Warren, who is in the Royal Air Force, and who seizes any opportunity to fly north to visit her.<sup>3</sup>

There followed in April Sir John Ervine's *Robert's Wife*; Ivor Novello's *Full House* ("Elaine Hamill appears in a grand role as a horsey woman with no little charm and who is made love to by another woman's husband");<sup>4</sup> in May Norman Ginsbury's *Viceroy Sarah* (Elaine as Sarah Churchill)<sup>5</sup> and *The Shining Hour* in which Elaine acted the familiar role of Mariella.<sup>6</sup>

In June the Repertory Theatre produced Noel Coward's *Hay Fever* with Elaine as a smart woman about town;<sup>7</sup> John van Druten's *The Distaff Side* ("Elaine Hamill, in what is probably her best part yet, made an entrancing worldly aunt");<sup>8</sup> Sheila Donisthorpe's *Children to Bless You!* ("Elaine Hamill merits special mention");<sup>9</sup> Clemence Dane's *A Bill of Divorcement* ("Elaine Hamill was outstanding").<sup>10</sup>

They began July with Margaret Kennedy's *The Constant Nymph*, then Merton Hodge's *Wind and the Rain* and Lesley Storm's *Tony Draws a Horse*. In August, Edward Percy's *Suspect*, Ronald Mackenzie's *The Maitlands*. In September Shaw's *Pygmalion*, Ben Travers's *Rookery Nook*. In October *They Walk Alone* ("Elaine Hamill adds to her already high reputation in the deeply emotional part of the mistress who alone suspects the murderess")<sup>11</sup> and *Love on the Dole*. In November Kenneth Horne's *Yes And No* and Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*, which they played in Dundee and Perth.

Elaine took part in every one of these plays.

Her brother Warren was killed in late December 1940.

In the New Year of 1941 the “Rep.” produced Ivor Novello’s *A Symphony in Two Flats* in mid-January, then Shaw’s *Arms and the Man* and in February the Stuarts’ *Sixteen* was a “triumph”<sup>12</sup> and Jacques Deval’s *Mademoiselle* “outstanding for its characterisations”,<sup>13</sup>

... there is the society butterfly who is most hopelessly entangled in her social engagements and domestic affairs, and rattling off utter nonsense at a truly amazing speed. Elaine Hamill romps through this part with glorious abandon.<sup>14</sup>

In March it was Philip Johnston’s *Lover’s Leap* (“Elaine Hamill gets an opportunity for some fireworks in the part of the high-spirited wife who bursts into hysteria at a thunderstorm, and this she does in grand style”).<sup>15</sup> In April Martin Vale’s melodrama *The Two Mrs Carrolls, Double Door* and HV Esmond’s *Eliza Comes to Stay*.

In May they produced Eden Philpotts’s *Yellow Sands*, with Elaine Hamill in the important role of Jennifer Varwell; then Dodie Smith’s *Call it a Day* and Gordon Sherry’s *Black Limelight*. In June Dennis Ogden’s *The Peaceful Inn*, Norman Ginsbury’s *Walk in the Sun*.

Thirty-three plays in a little over a year. What was she doing there? On 27 August the *Dundee Evening Telegraph* went some way toward explaining why Elaine Hamill, who had such great and well publicised ambitions for a career on the London stage, was living in Dundee.

It also showed an example of industrial relations alien to our current concepts. Forelock tugging sycophancy? or gentle loyalty and respect? It was a different age.

## Mill Workers' Tribute to Director and Fiancee



The courtyard of South Mills, Dundee, belocked with Union Jacks and colourful bunting, was the scene of a happy presentation function to-day.

Central figures were Mr Murray Campbell Scarlett, C.A., managing director of South Mills, Ltd., elder son of Mr and Mrs W. Campbell Scarlett, and his fiancee, Miss Elaine Hamill, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs J. E. Hamill, Rotorua, New Zealand. Miss Hamill has been one of the principals at Dundee Repertory Theatre for over a year.

They had toured the decorated flats of the mills, where they received a rousing reception, and at midday the employees from both South Mills and Garden Mills assembled in the courtyard and paid tribute to the esteem in which they are held.

The fact that Miss Hamill hails from New Zealand had inspired someone to write out a Maori welcome alongside one of the Union Jacks. It read: "Kai ora kit ia."

It is a friendly expression meaning something like, "Hello, how are you!"

With the mill lassies forming the majority of the audience, the presentation took place on a platform at an entrance. Mr William Sandeman, a wood turner, who is an old employee, presided, and on repeated calls from the employees the platform party was joined by Mr W. Campbell Scarlett.

On behalf of the employees of both works, Miss Rose Ann Rose, who has been engaged at South Mills for many years, made the presentation of a silver tea set.

In his reply Mr Scarlett referred to the "good spirit prevailing at all times" between the directors of South Mills and their employees. He also spoke of the "loyal co-operation and friendly help" they had got from the employees. Miss Hamill and he were most grateful for their kindness.

Miss Hamill also expressed thanks.

The wedding takes place quietly in the Cathedral Church of St Paul on September 5 at 11.30 a.m.

Rose Rose presents the silver tea set to the happy couple.  
*Dundee Evening Telegraph* 27 August 1941.

# Dundee Business Man Weds

## Bride Well-Known Actress

Great interest was shown in the wedding which took place in the Cathedral Church of St Paul, Dundee, today.

Spectators who crowded the pavements in front of the church had commenced to assemble an hour before the bride was due to arrive.

The bridegroom, who is a well-known business man, was Mr Murray Campbell Scarlett, C.A., son of Mr and Mrs W. Campbell Scarlett, Lincroft, Rosemount. His bride was Miss Elaine W. Hamill, a former principal of Dundee Repertory Company. She is the younger daughter of Mr and Mrs J. E. Hamill, Rotorua, New Zealand.

Employees of South Mills, Ltd., of which the bridegroom is managing director, were given a holiday, and they formed a large part of the crowd of onlookers. The staff had seats in the church.

When the bridegroom's father arrived he was given a vociferous welcome. Catherine M'Kenna, an old employee of the firm, almost emptied a carton of confetti over him.

The bride was given away by Mr R. N. Band, Beechtower, West Ferry. She was smartly dressed in a bolero frock of ice blue silk marocain, with which she wore black accessories. Her black ring velvet hat, with its shallow tammy crown and little flat brim, over which fell at the back curling black ostrich plumes, was reminiscent of "The Princes in the Tower."



Elaine Hamill on her wedding day 5 September 1941.



*Dundee Courier* 6 September 1941.

She carried a sheaf of pips of gladioli in autumnal colouring and white heather.

The bride was attended by the bridegroom's eldest sister, Mrs David W. Watson, who was matron-of-honour. Her blade silk marocain frock showed a front panel of ice blue, and her long gloves were also of the same shade of blue. Her becoming little black hat was of straw artistically allied with Chantilly lace. Over her shoulders she wore a silver fox wrap. Flight Lieut. H. Campbell Scarlett, brother of the bridegroom, was best



man, and Rev. J. L. Stewart conducted the wedding service.

A family gathering was afterwards held at Balgowan, the home of Mr and Mrs David W. Watson.

Mrs Band had chosen a smart black suit and black hat with cire trimming. A spray of pink carnations nestled in her silver fox wrap.

The bridegroom's mother favoured a black frock with floral corsage and black bolero. Her black hat was adorned with veiling. Her spray was pink carnations.

The bridegroom's gift to the bride was a summer ermine coat, and the bride gave the bridegroom an ivory brush set in pig skin case.<sup>16</sup>

The *Auckland Star* said,

The Scarlett family own two enormous jute mills, of which Mr Scarlett is general manager. He is a prominent golfer, and is described as being tall and of fine physique.<sup>17</sup>

William Murray Campbell Scarlett was the elder son, born 1906, of William Campbell and Ella Scarlett, owner of jute mills in Dundee and Gilbert & Sullivan enthusiasts. Murray had a brother and two sisters. In 1937 he got a private pilot licence and before the War he briefly owned a British Aircraft Swallow 2 which he kept at Scone airfield.<sup>18</sup> He was a keen golfer and owned his own yacht on the Tay, the *St George* and was a midshipman in the Royal Naval Reserve. He was a member of the Panmure Shooting Syndicate.<sup>19</sup>

In January 1943 the employees of South Mills held a whist drive and dance in aid of the Dundee Royal Infirmary; Mrs Murray Scarlett presented the prizes.<sup>20</sup> She re-registered as a nurse in 1943 and 1946 and worked in a children's ward in Dundee during the war, when she gave her address as 9

Hyndford St Dundee: a modest semidetached house on a corner section.



9 Hyndford St Dundee.

In May 1946 Mrs Murray Scarlett produced the Hawkhill Girls' Club one act play at a youth club drama festival in the Dundee Little Theatre.<sup>21</sup>

In July 1946,

### **Aero Club Again On The Wing**

Mrs Murray Scarlett, Dundee, had the first flip round Perth when Strathtay Aero Club took the air at Scone Aerodrome on Saturday for the first time since the war began.

Ten minute joy rides—a feature for the opening day only—were given in one of the Club's two Tiger Moths, painted in the Strathtay colours of blue and silver, by Wing Cdr. F. D. Nugent, C.O. of the station, who also acted as instructor for trial lessons to intending pilots.<sup>22</sup>

In November 1946,

## *Nova Scotia Launched At Walker Yard*

About 2,000 Vickers Armstrong employees, and a party of guests, watched Mrs Murray Scarlett launch the 11,600 ton Furness Withy passenger vessel S.S. Nova Scotia from Vickers Yard at Walker today.

There was a rousing cheer from the watching workmen as the beribboned bottle splashed against her bow and she went smoothly down the ways.<sup>23</sup>



“Mrs Murray Scarlett, wife of Mr Murray Campbell Scarlett, Dundee, launched the 6,900 ton steamer Nova Scotia from Walker Yard, on the Tyne, of Messrs Vickers Armstrong, Ltd. The steamer is for Johnston Warren Lines, Ltd., for passenger and cargo service between Britain and Newfoundland.” *Dundee Courier* 11 November 1946.

In October 1947,

Mrs. Murray Scarlett, better known to New Zealanders as Miss Elaine Hamill, has returned to the Dominion for the first time in 12 years. She is accompanied by her husband, and plans to stay here about four months.

Before her marriage she made a prominent name for herself in the theatre world in London.<sup>24</sup>

## **ACTRESS RETURNS ON HOLIDAY**

### **TO SPEND FIVE MONTHS IN N.Z.**

Among passengers who reached Wellington recently by the Corinthic were Mr and Mrs Murray Scarlett, on a holiday visit from England. Mrs Scarlett is well known to New Zealanders as the talented Dominion-born actress Miss Elaine Hamill, who left to continue her stage career overseas 12 years ago.

Before her marriage in 1941, Mrs Scarlett took part in many stage productions in London and in B.B.C. plays, but since then she has concentrated upon being "a good housewife." During the war, Mrs Scarlett (who completed her nursing training at the Napier Hospital) nursed at one of the children's clinics in Dundee, Scotland, where she and her husband are living. Mr Scarlett is managing director of South Mills, Dundee, and chairman of the Dundee Linoleum Company, and his visit to New Zealand is a combined business and holiday trip.

In 1935 Mrs Scarlett made her last appearance on the stage before New Zealand audiences with a J.C. Williamson Australian company in three plays with a cast which included Ethel Morrison and Lloyd Lamble.

Expecting to remain in the Dominion for four or five months, Mr and Mrs Scarlett will visit first Mrs Scarlett's parents in Rotorua, where they have made their home since leaving Taihape some years ago.<sup>25</sup>

In June 1848 Mrs Murray Campbell Scarlett was a member of the Dundee Youth Appeal Committee to raise funds for boys' and girls' clubs.<sup>26</sup>



W. MURRAY SCARLETT C. A., J. P. WITH DARKIE

Murray Scarlett with his dog and gun.

In November 1948,

Two fashion parades will be held in Caird Hall, Dundee, on Monday. They are sponsored by the Dundee Women Citizens' Association. Proceeds are in aid of the Boys' and Girls' Clubs. The afternoon session will be opened by Lady Lyell of Kinnordy, and the evening one by H. J. Scrymgeour-Wedderburn, prospective Unionist candidate for Dundee. The mannequins have been drawn from Dundee and district and include:—Mrs Murray Scarlett....<sup>27</sup> She was 37.

In September 1950 she assisted her parents-in-law at a fundraiser for the Unionist and Liberal National candidate,

DUNDEE UNIONISTS' COFFEE MORNING. There were 265 visitors to the lovely grounds of Moyness, Broughty Ferry—the home of Mr H. Campbell Scarlett—yesterday when Dundee Unionist and Liberal National Association held a coffee morning. Sponsored by the central entertainment committee, the function was organised Mrs H. Campbell Scarlett, assisted by ladies of the committee of Broughty Ferry Wards X. and XI. Proceeds will go to the Broughty Ferry stall at a garden fete to be held in Helen's grounds to-morrow. A fruit and vegetable stall was in charge of Mrs Murray Scarlett, assisted by Mr S. Fyffe, gardener at Moyness. Mrs M. C. Freeland also had a stall. Helpers included Mrs Stephen, Mrs Fenton, Mrs Gavine, Mrs Parker. Mrs Tawse, Miss Kennedy, and Miss Laird. Miss Janet S. Murray, prospective Unionist and Liberal National candidate for Dundee East, attended. Including proceeds from stalls, £31 was realised.<sup>28</sup>

In November 1951 she was on her mother-in-law's committee to organise the Dundee Unionist and Liberal National

Association ball: “The programme will include Scottish country dancing as well as ballroom dancing.”<sup>29</sup>

In July 1953 she tied for second place with a 77 in the Bronze Division (handicap) of the open meeting of the Ladies’ Panmure Golf Club, Barry.<sup>30</sup>

Her mother died that year, leaving Elaine “my coloured photograph of me in fancy costume” and leaving everything else to Elaine’s sister Jocelyn.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps her mother thought she had riches enough.

In 1967 she gave her address as 45 Seafield Road, Broughty Ferry, Dundee—an upmarket mansion. She seems to have settled comfortably into the life of Scottish gentility as Mrs Murray Scarlett.

Murray Scarlett’s nephew Robert Scarlett told me,

*Murray was the very successful Chairman of a substantial textile business and head of the extended Scarlett family. Elaine retained her elegance and ability to get on with people whether social friends, Murray’s business contacts or the many Scarlett and Hamill relatives. Murray and Elaine did not have any children but they always ensured that a visit to their house was rather special and enjoyable for their many guests. Elaine played a lot of golf with my mother and other mutual friends of their generation. Regrettably all of the above lifestyle was steadily inhibited by the onset of multiple sclerosis in the 1970s which resulted in Elaine’s untimely death in 1981.*

Elaine Warren (Hamill) Scarlett died aged 70 in 1981. William Murray Campbell Scarlett lived into his nineties and died in November 2000.

## **Mrs Elaine Scarlett dies**

Mrs Elaine Campbell Scarlett, a member of a well-known family connected with the jute and flax trade in Dundee, died yesterday at her home, 42 Fintry Place, Broughty Ferry, after a long illness.

Mrs Scarlett originally came from New Zealand where she was an actress. She also went on to make a name for herself in the Australian theatre.

In London, she appeared in repertory, and came to Dundee for a season.

During this spell, she met her future husband, Mr Murray Campbell Scarlett, who was to become chairman and managing director of South Mills (Textiles) Ltd.

Mr Scarlett entered the family spinning business in 1929 after qualifying as a chartered accountant.

The couple became engaged in London and were married in 1941 in Dundee.

During the war Mrs Scarlett was involved in Red Cross work.

She was a member of Panmure Golf Club, Barry.

Mrs Scarlett is survived by her husband.





Elaine Scarlett's death recorded at the foot of the Scarlett gravestone at Western Cemetery, Perth Road, Dundee.

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- 1 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 16 April 1940.
  - 2 *Dundee Courier* 16 April 1940.
  - 3 *Bay of Plenty Beacon* 13 November 1940.
  - 4 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 27 April 1940.
  - 5 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 18 May 1940.
  - 6 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 25 May 1940.
  - 7 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 1 June 1940.
  - 8 *Dundee Courier* 11 June 1940.
  - 9 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 18 June 1940.
  - 10 *Dundee Courier* 25 June 1940.
  - 11 *Dundee Courier* 8 October 1940.
  - 12 *Dundee Courier* 11 February 1941.
  - 13 *Dundee Courier* 25 February 1941.
  - 14 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 25 February 1941.
  - 15 *Dundee Courier* 1 April 1941.
  - 16 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 5 September 1941.
  - 17 *Auckland Star* 24 September 1941.
  - 18 <https://aviation-safety.net/wikibase/wiki.php?id=66663>.
  - 19 4062. Dundee City Archives. Murray Campbell Scarlett (fl 1927-1980), Chairman, South Mills (Textiles) Ltd, Dundee. Personal correspondence, 1927-8; business correspondence, 1950-80; records of Wm. Watson (Dundee) Ltd, dyers and finishers, Forebank Dye Works, Dundee, including Articles of Association, 1925-81; annual reports and accounts, 1972-74; personal investment accounts, 1926-43; private pilot's licence and log book, 1936-52; copies of Strathord shoot accounts, 1956-75; copies of Panmure Shooting Syndicate accounts, 1975-78; typescript copy of Essays on Flax-Spinning and Remarks on the Management of East Mill, Dundee by William Brown, Manager, 1819. (Archivist, Dundee City.) 2 pages.
  - 20 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 21 January 1943.
  - 21 *Dundee Courier* 10 May 1946.
  - 22 *Perthshire Advertiser* 31 July 1946.
  - 23 *Shields Daily News* 8 November 1946.
  - 24 *Gisborne Herald* 16 October 1947.
  - 25 *Bay of Plenty Times* 31 October 1947.
  - 26 *Dundee Courier* 26 June 1948.
  - 27 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 20 November 1948.
  - 28 *Dundee Courier* 22 September 1950.
  - 29 *Dundee Courier* 20 November 1951.
  - 30 *Dundee Courier* 16 July 1953.
  - 31 NZ National Archives: Hamilton Court Probate Records 1953 P9652-P9681

**Chapter 8: films**

1934 *Splendid Fellows* Jean Parker

1935 *Grandad Rudd* Betty

1936 *Thoroughbred* uncredited minor role

1938 *Lovers and Luggers* Stella Raff

1939 *The Outsider* Ragatzi's nurse